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Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Mardi
16 mai 2017

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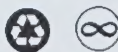
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 mai 2017

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2017 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2017, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa South.

It gives me great pleasure to have a few minutes now to speak about our budget motion. Of course, Mr. Speaker, you will know that in 2017 we have a balanced budget, the first balanced budget since the global recession. Not only are we balancing the budget this year, but we're on track to do so again next year and the year after.

What's so important is that a balanced budget means more funding for the programs and services people rely on most. Those that come to mind immediately are health care and education, but also this budget contains some very exciting news for the clients that my ministry, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, serves. So I'm going to focus my remarks on some of those provisions in this budget.

For those with developmental disabilities, we're making an investment of more than \$670 million over four years. This will provide another 375 additional residential developmental services placements for individuals with urgent needs and for youth transitioning from the child welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you're aware that sometimes families and caregivers find adults with developmental disabilities challenging in terms of their needs. Sometimes it's complex medical needs; sometimes it's behavioural issues. We, unfortunately, do see people sometimes accommodated inappropriately in hospital and in long-term-care facilities. So this investment will make a tremendous difference in terms of more appropriately housing those individuals.

We will be expanding our Passport Program yet again. We have some 24,000 people now on that particular

program, and this funding will expand the supports available to those individuals.

We're also doing some work in terms of specialized clinical responses for individuals with complex special needs, working very closely with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. We, on this side of the House, have an excellent team approach in terms of interministerial work. My ministry works closely with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services as well as the Ministry of Education to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities get the care they need. In many cases, it's very individualized support that is needed, and we work together to ensure that we have a plan for individuals with developmental disabilities.

We've been able to increase asset limits, where families are able to contribute more in terms of their loved one's care. In other words, we are not expecting them to deplete any assets before eligibility for the Ontario Disability Support Program comes into place. This was a result of extensive consultations we did with families, caregivers and individuals across the province. We heard loud and clear that families want to be part of the support of their loved ones with developmental disabilities.

We have received a number of endorsements for our approach in this budget. I'm going to quote from Bryan Keshen. He's president and CEO of Reena. I'm sure many of us have come to know Bryan as a great advocate for those with developmental disabilities.

As Bryan says, "I am pleased to see an expanded investment in services through the Ministry of Community and Social Services for those in crisis and in transition to adult services. I am particularly thrilled to see the recognition and investment in interministerial efforts with expanded housing, support for caregivers, and health services targeted to the most vulnerable populations of which those with developmental disabilities are disproportionately represented." This is the type of endorsement we are receiving from across the sector.

Of course, we have an increase to ODSP rates as well that will benefit those with developmental disabilities, because, in fact, of all the people on ODSP, some 20% have a developmental disability.

This is just a small part of our budget 2017-18—a very important part. I urge all members of this House, of course, to support this investment and these very vital services for vulnerable Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing with the debate: the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to the budget motion. I was very happy last Friday to be at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to make an announcement with regard to newborn screening—actually, a lot more things than just newborn screening. We described it as the baby budget.

The most important part of the budget for me is OHIP+ pharmacare for children and youth 24 and under. If you live in Renfrew-Nipissing, and you're 24 years old or under, you will be able to go to your pharmacist after January 1—if we can pass this budget bill, which I'm sure we can get done before we rise this summer. You go to the pharmacy, you go with your script, you go with your OHIP card and you'll leave with your prescription—no cost, no deductible, no copay.

I've heard from pharmacists and physicians and nurses about the challenge that some families have in paying for their prescriptions. We know that pharmaceuticals and medicines have evolved rapidly over the last 20 or 30 years. They have evolved rapidly since the beginning of medicare, and they're a significant component of what people need to get well.

This measure in the budget is a game-changer, not only for what it will do for families in Ontario: families with children suffering with diabetes, families with children who are suffering from mental illness—I could go on and on.

The other important thing about this measure in the budget is, we need to have a national pharmacare plan. We need to have that conversation. We need to get to universal coverage.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I know the members opposite agree, because I can hear them right over there. We need to have that national conversation, and I hope they can support us in that. It's critical. It's critical because medicines are essential to people getting well. We know that. We know that it's a struggle, and we know that we have to do more to make sure people have access to medicines.

0910

Speaker, I was also pleased to announce two new screens for newborn screening. As most of the members in this Legislature would know, since 2006, we expanded the screens for newborn babies. These are screens for a range of diseases, genetic diseases and a number of other medical conditions. We have expanded that now to 31. We added two new additional screens. We now screen more than any other province. I think we're the jurisdiction that screens the most in North America as well.

We added a screening for congenital heart disease. About 400 to 500 babies each year are born with a congenital heart defect. That could be a really serious situation for a family to be in. The challenge is that sometimes they might not find out for a week, two weeks, maybe a few months or maybe longer, and that puts that child at risk. This test will now identify early those defects so that they can be properly treated. They'll have a better chance at having a healthy outcome, a brighter future.

Actually, I was joined by the member from Ottawa Centre, the Attorney General, whose son, Rafi, was actually in the same unit that we visited on Friday. It was a very emotional time for him. I'm very proud of the fact that we have newborn screening, that it's housed at CHEO, and of the work that Dr. Pranesh Chakraborty and his team do there on newborn screening. They screen every baby in Ontario—since 2006, 1.5 million babies. That's incredible.

We also talked about a supplemental test for hearing, to augment the tests and the work that we already do. This test will, again, early identify children, babies who are at a potential for hearing loss, and be able to make sure that they get the assistance, the literacy they need, to make sure that they have a better chance at having a healthier outcome. I'm very proud of those two new tests and the fact that where that's being done is in my riding of Ottawa South. I'm very proud of the work they do at newborn screening.

As well, we announced—as part of the baby budget—up to 90 new midwives to practise here in Ontario. Our oldest daughter, Kirsten, had our latest addition to the family Fraser almost a year ago in a couple of weeks. I remember we got called to come over to the house. She had a midwife, Kelley Scott. We got called to come over to the house. We got there at about 10 o'clock in the morning. We took Vaughan, who is her oldest son, to the Teddy Bears' Picnic at CHEO. This is about 10 o'clock. We stayed until about 1 o'clock, came back, put Vaughan down for his nap. I went for a nap too because I was exhausted. I was lying on the couch.

My daughter went in at 9 o'clock in the morning. She came in the door at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, woke me up and she was at the door. I thought, "My gosh, it was a false alarm." Well, no. It wasn't a false alarm, because she was bringing a Fraser into the house.

That's an incredible thing, an incredible choice for families and mothers who are having children, to be able to have access to midwives, to be home the same day, to birth at home or to birth at the Ottawa birthing centre in my riding. That's an incredible thing for a lot of moms. I'm very proud that we made that investment in the budget and look forward to seeing the further expansion of midwifery in Ontario.

We also announced pumps for preemies, which is breast pumps for women who have had premature babies. That will help those babies to thrive so they'll have access to their mother's breast milk. I'm very proud of that program as well. Also our support for the milk bank, which I think is just across the way over here on University Avenue. It's been going for a number of years. I think they've gone through 4,000 litres that they've provided up until now.

One of the other investments was in BORN, which is the Better Outcomes Registry and Network. Every child that is born in Ontario is now followed by the Better Outcomes Registry and Network. That's for a number of things. It's closely aligned with newborn screening.

One of the investments that they made was to collect better data on pregnancy and infant loss. I know this is

something that's very dear to the heart of the member from Eglinton—Lawrence. I was proud of the fact that we made some investments in last year's budget to address that. Many families are touched by this type of loss. We need to talk about it more. We need to have better data, better understanding, so that the health care providers can ensure that mothers and families who are experiencing these losses have access to the proper supports.

The investment in being able to collect that data—and, indeed, all the work that BORN does; I think there are over a million children right now—is really critical to better outcomes for children. It's not exciting, necessarily—a new medicine or a new procedure—but it's a very effective way of ensuring that we can deliver the kind of care that we need to, by understanding what the population needs are. And the only way that you can do that is to collect data. I'm very proud of that investment.

As well, hospital capital: We're investing another \$9 billion over 10 years, to \$20 billion for hospital capital. This is really important. We all talk in debate here and in question period about the hospitals and health care facilities in our ridings, and those investments—for instance in Ottawa we've got Project Stitch at CHEO, which is an expansion of ambulatory care. We have a brand new heart institute, which should be finished some time later this year or early next year. Those things are critical to ensure that the people in our communities get the care that they need. I know that I'm very proud of that investment.

In particular there were a couple of things in the budget—and you wouldn't necessarily see them, because they didn't come on a big page with a big diagram—that for me were personally very satisfying to see there because of some of the work I've been fortunate enough to be allowed to do as a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. That has to do with hospice and palliative care.

Let me say at the outset I'm very proud to work with all members in this Legislature who advocate for hospice and palliative care in their communities, all those who really go above and beyond to support that in their communities, beyond their role as legislators in this chamber and in their other work. I want to say thank you to all those members for their support and for the work they do for something that I think is really critical and important for the people we all serve.

When I had the opportunity to do some consultations around hospice and meet many people across the province—great people who are doing great work—one of the things that occurred to me is that hospice palliative care is a community-based initiative that government supports. That's a critical piece of what makes it work. It's a critical piece of its development. That community support also adds in things like affinity, volunteerism and an understanding of the need.

But we realize that not all communities are equal, and that we need to find a way to support hospice in the sense of capital. Hospice is right now a capital investment by a community, by a fundraising effort, often through multiple members inside the community, thousands of people

coming together like they did for Roger's House, Ruddy-Shenkman Hospice in Ottawa and Matthews House in Alliston. But we realize that not all communities are equal, so in the budget you'll find—I don't know what page it's on; I was trying to find it—that there is going to be support for capital dollars for hospice.

I'm very proud of that work that's been done by the ministry to find a way to make sure that we can help communities further leverage the support they have in their community and get their hospices up and done and running. Hopefully in the next number of weeks we'll be able to announce that. I can't give you details right now. I'm very proud of that piece, that it's in there and the work that has been done by the folks who I'm privileged to work with inside the ministry.

0920

The other piece is an investment around long-term care and palliative care. Long-term care is home. As we know, most people would like to die at home, and we need to treat long-term care as home. There is some real excellence in palliative care happening in long-term care across this province. I've been lucky to have met a number of people and toured a number of homes where they're really doing an excellent job.

But we know we have to deliver that everywhere. Inside the budget, you'll see it—again, it's on a line; it's on a page with a bunch of graphs. We are going to invest in ensuring that we can have quality palliative care across all of our long-term-care homes in Ontario. I think that that's, again, a really critical piece.

Speaker, I'm very proud of the measures in this budget. You know, I did start this—well, some people might say I'm rambling, but I did start this discourse—

Hon. Chris Ballard: Never.

Mr. John Fraser: Never?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Never.

Mr. John Fraser: Okay—start this discourse talking about OHIP+, and I can't emphasize it enough. I cannot emphasize it enough. It is a big step in the journey that's going to bring us to universal pharmacare in this country. I truly believe that. That's where we have to get to.

We need to have a national conversation. The federal government has to come to the table. They have to be at the table, because it's critical that we're all together to ensure that we can get the best cost for our pharmaceuticals, make sure that we have universal coverage, bring us all together around this thing that is really, as has been described, the second stage of medicare. I think Tommy Douglas described it as that.

That's interesting because, as I said, medicines play a far more important role, I think, than they did 50 years ago in cures. That's why I'm very proud of that measure in the budget.

I look forward to the continuation of debate, and I want to thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to provide a few comments on the minister's and the member for Ottawa South's presentation on the budget.

I'm particularly interested in the member for Ottawa South's comments about hospice. We had a conversation, he and I, yesterday about a hospice in my riding up in North Grenville. It's called the Beth Donovan Hospice. It has been operating for about 25 years. It started as a volunteer hospice associated with the Catholic church in the municipality of Merrickville-Wolford.

They now, as of this month, just opened their forever home. It was a home that had been donated to the hospice. It's a rather large facility. I had the pleasure of touring that facility with the member for Ottawa South last summer, and I want to thank him for taking time to drive down to North Grenville and seeing the facility. I think he told me it took him about five or 10 minutes to zip down; maybe more.

That particular facility is sort of at a crossroads now. They've dealt with the Champlain LHIN for a number of years. There has been this undercurrent about governance that I hope is resolved between Hospice Care Ottawa and the management of the Beth Donovan Hospice.

When I was elected in March 2010, shortly after my election, Beth Donovan passed away. I can remember going to Smiths Falls for her wake and speaking to her family about the importance of her legacy and the importance of ensuring that residents of the municipalities of North Grenville and Merrickville-Wolford have that opportunity to have a hospice where they can die with dignity and where they know that there are volunteers and officials who can provide that good level of care.

I look forward to having more conversations with the member for Ottawa South about the Beth Donovan Hospice. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I want to make a few comments, first to the Minister of Community and Social Services. She talked about the dollars that were going into the budget that will help people with developmental disabilities, and yet we still have 14,000 on a wait-list for residential services in this province. We have residential homes that are under providers that are being forced to send in balanced budgets even though they're struggling to balance those budgets. We know that those balanced budgets will only come down to one thing, and that means cuts to the home, to the staffing levels, to whatever the needs are in that home.

You can't force a balanced budget when you have an increased cost of hydro, when you have mandated pay equity, when you have all of these things being forced on top of you and then you're being told that you have to hand in a balanced budget. It just doesn't work.

Thank you for the extra dollars. They will help some families. But there is way too much in this system that will still fall behind.

I want to mention the member from Ottawa South. He talked about the strategies coming in for new babies. People with FASD—we know that there are dollars going into FASD, but the community is still unhappy. I've heard from them directly about the lack of an

integrated strategy to go with those dollars. They feel that there isn't enough in place to ensure that the needs are actually being met. I'm happy to share that letter with the member opposite.

Also, we're hearing about young babies who are being born with opioid addictions and the lack of resources that are available for them.

That's my time, Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: There is so much that has been said by the Minister of Community and Social Services and the member from Ottawa South. I just wanted to mention: She mentioned an organization that does so much amazing work in my community and across the province, and that's the Reena Foundation. It takes care of so many young adults, adults who have developmental disabilities, and they work 24/7. I'm glad that this budget invests in organizations like the Reena Foundation.

I also want to comment on the member from Ottawa South, who talked about investing in newborn screening and adding two more to the 31 screens we already have. That is more than you can get in any other province. It doesn't even exist in the United States.

By doing newborn screening, you can have our expert doctors start to take remedial actions to deal with the diagnosed genetic screens. I think he mentioned the new screening for hearing. I had friends who had a child that had a hearing impairment. They didn't really find out that the child had a hearing impairment until the child was almost two years of age, because it's sometimes a very complex thing, being a parent trying to—if they had had that early screening of that child, they could have taken action. As you know, right now, one of the amazing scientific investments they make is in cochlear implants, where they can make an implant at a very early age in a child so the child almost functions normally from a hearing perspective.

These screening investments are, again, the best in North America. What this budget invests in is children, so that we won't have to have children go through the trauma of these health issues for years to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise for debate today on this very important piece of legislation for the government. We were talking a lot about long-term care and, obviously, the health care of children, both of which are incredibly important to me, as well as palliative care.

When my colleague talked about Beth Donovan, my seatmate and I were thinking how hard it is when we see people who are so strong in our community and who are great friends pass on. I've had the pleasure of working with Bruyère continuing care. In fact, for my 40th birthday—because I, as a Conservative, believe that government does have a purpose, but I think that so we all do. We all have our own personal responsibility, and government can't and shouldn't do it all by itself. So for my 40th birthday, I actually had a fundraiser. We raised

\$40,000 for the hospice at Ruddy-Shenkman in Kanata, which is just a new hospice—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry to interrupt, but pursuant to standing order 58(d), I am now required to put the question.

0930

On April 27, 2017, Mr. Sousa moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On May 8, 2017, Mr. Fedeli moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on April 27, 2017, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following: “recognizes that Ontario has not balanced the budget and in fact contains a \$5-billion operational deficit financed through one-time revenue sources and cash grabs, and \$10 billion in new debt, and therefore the government has lost the confidence of this House.”

The first question to be decided is on Mr. Fedeli’s amendment to the motion. Therefore, is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Fedeli’s amendment to the motion carry? I believe I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Chris Ballard: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 132:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 1 p.m. on Friday, May 19, 2017; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 5 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2017; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, May 29, 2017, from 1 p.m. to midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Monday, May 29, 2017, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto, with one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a) being permitted; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, May 30, 2017; and

That, in the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 30 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That at the end of this time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Ballard has moved government motion number 30.

Back to Minister Ballard.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I believe that the parliamentary assistant to energy will be making further remarks later in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Oh, my goodness, Speaker. You know, I find it—wow. That’s the way this government operates, Speaker, to move a closure motion and then for this government to not to even try to justify using this type of tactic just speaks volumes about this government.

For those who weren’t paying attention to the Minister of Housing, the government is trying to take Bill 132 and

choke off debate. I'm going to get to that term of choking off debate in a few moments, but effectively what will happen with this government motion, after two hours of debate, is that we'll vote on this motion, which will result in this bill receiving seven hours of committee time. It will meet on Wednesday, May 24, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and then again from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. to have public hearings, to actually solicit opinions from Ontarians about this government's hydro policy.

People will only have—if they want to drive to Toronto or come to Toronto or teleconference—five minutes. Each party will get three minutes to question them, and then the government will bring the bill back to committee for clause-by-clause. They'll deal with amendments in one day. They will then report the bill back to the House, and with very limited debate—this motion calls for 30 minutes of debate at third reading—the government will invoke this motion and pass the bill.

So you had a situation where this government spent a ton of money, Speaker, on advertising their hydro plan—actually, advertising it before they tabled the bill, which I contend is treating this House in an inferior manner.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They're treating the people of Ontario in an inferior manner.

Mr. Steve Clark: My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is correct. They treat Ontarians in an inferior manner.

I tabled a point of privilege yesterday that I'm looking forward to Speaker Levac ruling on.

Time after time when it comes to the hydro file, this government doesn't want to hear from Ontarians. It doesn't want to hear from the people from my riding of Leeds–Grenville, who have really struggled over the last almost 15 years with this government's energy policy.

Time after time, colleagues on this side of the House have taken the government to task on selling off Hydro One, on having poor customer service by utilities like Hydro One, and time after time, they've dismissed us. In fact, if you listen to the Minister of Energy, he'll talk about how he believes they've fixed the system.

I know in my house in the east end of Brockville—I live in the city—the services are underground, and pretty well every month my power goes out. It went out a couple of weeks ago right in the middle of the Ottawa Senators game on a Saturday afternoon for five hours, and that seems to be the norm in my neighbourhood. The power will go off once a month, once every six weeks, for anywhere between three hours to five hours, and that's an urban centre within my riding. That's in a city that has invested millions of dollars in putting underground distribution through the city. It's a sad statement on this government's policy.

0940

Time allocation, if you'll read the motion, is given under our standing orders. Standing order 47(a) reads: "The government House leader may move a motion with notice providing for the allocation of time to any proceeding on a government bill or substantive government motion." This is something that all parties have used.

This morning I'd like to quote from one of our members, the member for St. Catharines, who will be celebrating his 40th anniversary as a member of provincial Parliament in a couple of weeks. I was in high school when he was elected to the Legislature back in 1977. There's an interesting quote that applies to today that was given by Mr. Bradley on December 11, 2001. Let me read the entire quote:

"This is indeed an interesting bill, but what's even more interesting right now is the time allocation motion that faces us. For the people who are watching this perhaps on their television sets at home, I should clarify that. That is the choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation. We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That's most unfortunate, because it's what you would call anti-democratic."

"Anti-democratic." "Choking off of debate"—

Mr. Ted McMeekin: You did it 98% of the time.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, you'll have your chance, Minister, to provide your comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You had a chance. You stayed in your chair.

Mr. Steve Clark: Actually, you did have your chance and you didn't want to speak, so you can listen to me for a few minutes.

Speaker, again, these are Mr. Bradley's words, the dean of the Legislature: "choking off of debate."

Over the weekend I found out on social media that this Premier actually has blocked some doctors. Doctors were having a discussion about doctors' contracts with the OMA, and here's a Premier who uses the block button on her Twitter account not to hear voices. That, again, speaks volumes about this Premier.

When you talk about a time allocation motion, this is the equivalent of their blocking button that they would use on Twitter or Facebook. They're trying to block as many comments from Ontarians as possible. They don't want to hear opposition members stand up and talk about how terribly bad this government has handled our electricity sector, on how bad they've done in terms of listening to the customer service complaints and the billing complaints and the metering complaints. We had to bring in the Ombudsman, for goodness' sake, when André Marin was here. We had to actually, as members of the Legislature, call the Ombudsman and refer constituent complaints because we couldn't get any action by this government and couldn't get any action by Hydro One. It's unbelievable.

When the government provides some measures regarding hydro—they're all in when it comes to advertisements, but they wait until last Thursday to even bother tabling the bill, and then when they do, they immediately move to choke off debate. They had debate yesterday and now we're dealing with this block button today by this government.

Mr. Bradley goes on to say in his speech on December 11, 2001: "The best way to deal with legislation is to

have the government sitting most of the year so that it can receive careful analysis and debate in this House and in committees and, in fact, in committees that travel across the province to get meaningful input. We do not have that.”

Speaker, Jim Bradley is right. We certainly don’t have that with this time allocation motion. To have one day of hearings for seven hours, then to have one day of clause-by-clause and then to come back for a half an hour of debate at third reading? A 30-minute debate? This is supposed to be the government’s flagship plan on hydro, and it’s only good enough for 30 minutes of debate?

We used to have meaningful debate in this Legislature where we were actually able to provide comments, work through committee, be able to amend a bill and be able to take what we heard. In fact, this government employed it last summer briefly, with Bill 201 at the time, for financing reform for donations. We actually went out at first reading. I think a bill like this would have been great if the government had had that type of debate instead of having their ad campaign. I think it would have been a measure that people would have welcomed.

Time after time, this government hits the block button when it comes to listening to people. I want to go back to a quote that Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines, made on November 24, 1993. His quote is this, Speaker:

“I’m concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate. I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that’s been going on a very long period of time. But as I’ve indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening.”

He goes on to say, “All of us have experienced the situation where we have encountered our constituents and they’ve said, ‘What is this particular bill all about?’ or ‘How did this bill get passed and I didn’t know anything about it?’ They are legitimate questions. One of the reasons is that the bills tend to get passed very rapidly in this House.”

Again, I agree with Jim Bradley from November 24, 1993.

I’m not going to read out another quote that he made in 2001. But at the end of the quote, he talks about the most powerful person in government, and he says that that’s the whip, the chief government whip. That was his quote: that the government whip can tell their members when to show up, when to vote. It’s just so ironic, Speaker, that the person that the member for St. Catharines railed about when he was in opposition was in the position he holds today. I can’t believe that in that short a period of time, he has turned around.

I think we had, and we continue to have, a great opportunity to provide comments, suggestions, questions, to canvass public opinion, to allow our constituents to provide good, meaningful, thoughtful comments on government legislation, but not when this government hits the block button and doesn’t want to hear those voices—when this government decides that it knows better than

Ontarians. I think that type of attitude is really going to come home to roost for this government in about a year’s time. I think that their strategy for their whip and their House leader and their House leader’s staff is the wrong strategy for Ontarians. I can’t emphasize enough that the opportunity to have meaningful debate without cutting off debate—without choking off debate, as the member for St. Catharines stated over and over again—is the way to go.

Speaker, we not only have a closure motion on the order paper for Bill 132, but we also have one, motion number 29, for Bill 87, which I’m sure the government will be calling in order. I wouldn’t be surprised if they did it later on today.

Again, it’s surprising how the voices of Ontarians don’t matter to this government anymore, that they could care less about when we sit. Any time we want to debate, any time we want to put those comments on the floor of this Legislature, we get accused of delaying.

Remember what I said earlier, Speaker. Remember what I said in this time allocation motion: 30 minutes for third reading debate, seven hours for public hearings, five minutes for a constituent to come—in my case, in my riding, to drive three hours to Toronto for five minutes. Come on, Speaker; that’s not meaningful debate. That’s not a government that wants to hear those voices. It’s a sham. You should all be ashamed of yourselves. It’s going to come back on you.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It’s my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West to speak once again, unfortunately, to a time allocation motion brought forward by this Liberal government. For those who don’t know what time allocation means, it means the government doesn’t want to hear from you. That’s what it means. It means the government is trying to rush through legislation. They’re trying to push through their own agenda. They don’t want to hear from the other elected representatives in this House. They don’t want to hear from the constituents we represent. They don’t even want to hear from their own constituents, they’re in such a rush to push something through.

Today they’ve moved time allocation on the Fair Hydro Act. I think it’s a little rich that we’re talking about a Fair Hydro Act, and yet they’re doing time allocation, which is anything but fair to the representatives in this House and to the people that we represent. It is anything but fair to the people of this province. In fact, Speaker, just to show how unfair it is, this government only tabled the bill Thursday afternoon—Thursday, May 11, in the afternoon.

For those at home who don’t know our schedule, the House rises at 6 o’clock on a Thursday. We don’t sit on Fridays. We don’t sit on Saturdays. We don’t sit on Sundays. The first opportunity to debate the Fair Hydro Act—and I’m having a hard time even saying “Fair Hydro Act,” because those of us on this side of the House

know it is anything but fair when you're talking about putting billions of dollars of interest and debt on the backs of the people of this province who helped pay for the electricity system in the first place, only to have the government sell it out from underneath them with no mandate to do so. So it's really difficult to call it the Fair Hydro Act when it's anything but.

The government tabled the bill Thursday afternoon—

Interjection: It's a good name.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's a good name. They're very good at coming up with great names for bills and not very good at putting any substance in them or giving the people of this province any say.

The bill was tabled on Thursday, May 11. We didn't sit Friday. We didn't sit Saturday. We didn't sit Sunday. Yesterday, Monday, was the first day that anybody in this House had an opportunity to debate this bill. The people of this province haven't had a chance to actually get into the details of the bill, digest what's in it, and then come to any of the MPPs in this chamber, including the Liberal government side, and express any concerns they have, say if there's anything in it they do like. I would think they're probably not going to find much in there that they like, considering the government is saying they're cutting bills by 25%, but we know that bills have gone up 300% since 2000.

We know that the people of this province, over 80%, don't support the fact that the government is selling off our public asset. We know that the people of this province are smart enough to understand that in four years, if they had an opportunity to really look at the bill, which they're not going to have at this point—they would figure out that in four years their bills are going to skyrocket again and they're going to continue to climb. This government doesn't want the people of this province to know that, and that's shameful.

This government has had 14 years to do something about electricity prices. This government, when the rates went up, when things started to skyrocket, actually said, "There is no crisis in hydro. There's nothing going on. People aren't really struggling. We don't need to do anything. In fact, we can just keep charging ahead with the privatization of Hydro One."

They denied there was a problem. And now, under political pressure, because their polling numbers are tanking and there is an election looming, suddenly now—they're pretending to listen to the people in this province, put through a bill called the Fair Hydro Act and claim it is actually going to help the people of this province when anybody who has an opportunity—and unfortunately, not many will, thanks to this time allocation—to look at the bill knows that after the next election, not far down the road, their bills are going to skyrocket again.

It is shameful that this government is giving such little time to the people of this province and those of us in this chamber to look at the bill, come forward with concerns and actually have fulsome debate.

If that isn't bad enough, Speaker—to try and shut down conversation on this so that they can ram it through

before we rise on June 1—they're holding hearings here for one day, "here" being Toronto. The people in Windsor are going to have a difficult time getting here on the one day that this government is deciding to have hearings, which is May 24. That's not a lot of time down the road; it's just a little more than a week. So for people across this province, whether you're in the deep south like I am, or whether you're up north, you have one week to sort out trying to get time off of work, trying to figure out how you're going to get to Toronto, and trying to find out if you're going to have time to even just phone it in. That's it. This bill is anything but fair. This process is anything but fair.

Should you actually manage to find the time to be able to come up here, you have five minutes. That's it: Five minutes to speak to the committee. That's all the government wants to hear from you.

Hopefully, they don't have members—I've been in committee several times where their members are sleeping through committee, so they're clearly not even interested in hearing what those who come will say.

Speaker, it's important to note that although it's quoted as \$25 billion in interest charges, it could be as high as \$40 billion. The people of this province already paid for the electricity system. They have paid to upgrade the electricity system, and they're going to pay upwards of \$40 billion more because of Liberal mismanagement of the system. But the government doesn't want anybody in this House or anybody in this province to be able to talk about that, which is exactly why they're trying to shut down debate today. It's shameful.

The government had the opportunity to do the right thing quite a while ago for the people of this province, to actually address their electricity rates. They didn't take it. As I said before, they denied it was even happening. They denied that there was a crisis.

As those of us from the NDP caucus came forward, I personally collected bills from all across Windsor and Essex county. When I put that call out, people from across the province started sending me their bills, not just people in my area. I personally took them and put them on the desks of the Premier and the Minister of Energy. It was a large stack of bills. I'm still getting them; I'm still getting people sending me their bills.

They could have done something about it then. But instead of looking at those bills and listening to us on this side of the House talk about how our constituents were struggling, they disregarded it and they said, "There is no problem. That can't be right. Those people can't be right. There is no problem."

What they're doing today is trying to shut down our opportunity to say, "This plan that you have brought forward is not a good plan." In fact, the people who are already struggling to pay their hydro bills are going to have even more of a struggle just four short years down the road. This is not helping them; it's really not helping. When rates have gone up over 300% since the year 2000, 25% is nothing.

I should point out that they boast about taking the 8% HST off the bill. New Democrats opposed them even

putting that tax on the bill in the first place. It should never have been on the bill in the first place. Only when their polling numbers started to drop and they're facing an election did they decide to take that tax off the bill. And then they want to sound like they're the heroes because they've given you 8% off your hydro bill. They should never have put that 8% on the bill in the first place; it should never have been done. We opposed it from the beginning. We've called for it to be removed. I'm glad they finally listened, but it should never have been on there, and they certainly are not the heroes for finally deciding to take it off.

Speaker, we see far too often with the Liberal government that they want to time-allocate. They want to cut off debate. They don't want to hear from the people of this province. They want to pretend that they want to hear from the people of this province, but they don't really want to hear from the people in this province or the elected officials in this room, the people who are sent here to represent people across this province.

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It's unfortunate that this government would rather run their own agenda rather than do what it is that they are elected to do, which is to actually represent the best interests of the people of Ontario. Time allocation on a bill such as this, in the limited time that we've had to discuss it and the limited time that the people of this province have had to actually look at it, is nothing other than shameful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Shock of shocks: I'm up here again talking about a time allocation motion. Speaker, it certainly puts me on the disadvantage, because I had no time to prepare, because I fully expected the members of the government side to want to speak to it.

This is the second rotation through, and not a member on the government side has risen to defend this motion. Are they that ashamed of their own actions and how they treat this House with a lack of respect? Do they not even want to stand in their place and speak to the motion that was brought forth this morning by the Minister of Housing? Is that what it has come down to, or is it just so much a matter of course for this government now that they hardly notice themselves? Has it become so much—no pun intended—the orders of the day for that party that they hardly bat an eyelash?

It's just the normal course of business: "Bring forth a bill, a bill that affects every single solitary citizen in the province of Ontario, and we'll cut off debate after one afternoon and one evening debate"—one afternoon and one evening, yesterday. The bill was tabled on Thursday. No one had had an opportunity to even see the bill before that. It was brought for debate the very next sessional day—Monday, yesterday—and ended debate yesterday evening. And today, we will not debate this piece of legislation again. Oh, pardon me; yes, we will. Oh, Speaker, how wrong of me. The government, in all its kindness and consideration, has decided that there will be

30 minutes of debate allotted on third reading of Bill 132, a bill that they say changes the electricity situation for Ontarians for all time—as Muhammad Ali would have said, "For all time."

Well, Speaker, they should be—not ashamed of themselves; more than ashamed of themselves. A piece of legislation of this gravity, of this significance, and this is how we are treated here in this Legislature? This is how the people of Ontario are treated by this government?

Perhaps we should be conditioned to it, and maybe we should take it with a grain of salt, because it seems that every time I turn around, every time I come into this chamber, I'm faced with my folks in the underpress, the folks who pretty much tell us what to do, saying, "Oh, Yak, can you speak to another time allocation motion?" I say, "What? Is that all we get to debate? Is that all I get to debate anymore in this chamber, a time allocation motion?" A time allocation motion in this House—one more time for the old Gipper, as they say.

Well, Speaker, it is just about time to put a time allocation motion on this government. But this will not be one that is imposed by this Legislature. It will not be imposed by the opposition. It will not be imposed by the third party. It won't be imposed by the Sergeant-at-Arms. It will be imposed by the ultimate arbiter in this province, and that is the people.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That is the people who will pass judgment. Oh, and I know. I hear the minister. She's getting ready to crow, because she likes to crow and heckle when we're talking. She's getting ready to make some noise, but the reality is that I won't be passing judgment on this government. I'll have a vote in my constituency the same as everybody else, but across this province, the people will get to choose whether you win again, and they're going to look at some of the things that you have done. One of the things is going to be time allocation motions and how you have disrespected this House.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The minister says, "Oh, that's a hot one." No, it's all about the attitude. I say to the minister, it's not going to be about a specific motion, it's going to be about an attitude of arrogance that has taken over this government. From one end of the benches to the other, that is what they live every day: an attitude of arrogance when it comes to how they're treating this Legislature.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no. Sorry. I addressed him as the minister.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I addressed him as the minister. He's actually a former minister, and now he feels he has the responsibility to heckle even more. But he's talking about actions of previous governments. Well, I'm not here to defend the previous government. But I'll tell

you what I am here for: I am here to speak to the motion, and the rotation to speak came to your party, good sir, and you chose to sit on your hands.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Member from Ancaster, come to order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You had a chance to speak to this motion when it came to your party, and you chose to sit on your hands. So if you can't get up to defend it, you're just going to have to listen to me.

Now, Speaker, on the one hand, they want to talk about the actions of the previous government. Well, I wasn't even here. I wasn't even here, but I have some quotes from members of this government when they were in opposition. Oh my, do we have it when it comes to what was said in previous Parliaments.

The member for St. Catharines, I think he's—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, on June, is it 9 or 8—June 9, I believe it is, 1977. He's going to be 40 years elected. He's got a tremendous record in this Legislature: 40 years. I believe he's going to be maybe the second-longest sitting member in this Legislature next to Harry Nixon, who sat longer.

He has been through the mill a few times. He has been in opposition, then government, then opposition, then government again. When he was in opposition, he had a completely different attitude toward time allocation motions.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I say to the member from Windsor West, I've never been in government, so I never had a different attitude toward time allocation motions.

"I regret that we are dealing once again with yet another time allocation motion, which is a motion that chokes off debate in the Legislative Assembly." This is Mr. Bradley speaking. "It is my observation after a number of years, and I think talking to people who have observed this Parliament for a number of years, that it has been diminished so remarkably by this government that it has become almost irrelevant. That is most unfortunate, not simply for those of us who sit in the opposition or for the combatants who are of a partisan nature in this House, but for the democratic institution that indeed it has been in the past.

"It was once a significant institution, in my view. I remember, as a person before I was elected, coming and sitting in the public galleries. Those were the days where you didn't have somebody blocking you at the door and making you get passes and so on. You simply had to sit in the public gallery and watch the debates that took place. And we did sit in those days; the House did sit both in the daytime and sometimes in the evening, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

1010

"If you listened to the debate in those days—I'll say, admittedly, that there are always those who view the past as perhaps" much "better than the present, but I had a

number of students who have gone through the Hansards and read some of the speeches and noted that indeed they were very good speeches in the House in those days. They were more lengthy than they are now, in many cases, so that ideas were able to be elaborated upon."

Elaborated upon—elaborated. It's very difficult to elaborate on a subject when the debate is choked off, as the member from St. Catharines said. When the debate in this Legislature is choked off, how can you elaborate? I would like to speak to the bill itself, Bill 132, this significant hydro bill.

By the way, Speaker, does the time allocation debate have anything to do with the fact that the Liberals got caught again by the leaked cabinet document? You heard the minister and the Premier yesterday, saying, "Oh, but that's an old document." They only came out in March with the plan to reduce hydro rates by a further 17%, spending your money and your children's and grandchildren's money to do it. It only came out in March, and that leaked cabinet document was only prepared in response to that decision because it was designed to show the government what the consequences of that decision would be and how they would have to recoup that money down the road and to give them various options about how they would deal with that. If that is not a significant piece of information—and all of a sudden now, because the Liberals don't like what was revealed in the document, "Oh, it's an old document." What is old? What is old in this House? If somebody has been here 40 years, they've been here a long time, like Mr. Bradley. Forty years: That's a long time, but is he old? I don't know about that. But in the Liberals' eyes, a document that is more than a few weeks old is now ancient and irrelevant.

To the people of Ontario, it's not irrelevant. To the people of Ontario, it is telling them a story, a sorry story, about what the Liberals are going to do to them once they get re-elected—if they get re-elected. If they get a majority, it's going to be the same old thing all over again. Mark my words on this, Speaker: If the Liberals win the election in June 2018 and if they win a majority, all of those concerns—the 61% increase in hydro, the return of a debt retirement charge, the massive increases of people's monthly bills—it's not going to take four years or six years for that to happen; it will happen shortly after they're re-elected, because—you know what they will do? They will change the legislation to get back at the people sooner than was planned, just like when they promised there would never be a health tax and, when they got elected in 2003, they brought in the biggest tax in Canada's history, ever—ever. They brought in the biggest tax increase in Canada's history. So I say to the people: If you re-elect this government, watch out. Watch out for what happens to your hydro bills within very short order.

Today, we're not even going to get to talk about that much longer because, when this time allocation motion is over, it is—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, I'm going to run out of time. It's going to be 10:15.

Speaker, I hope you understand—I don't know if you've been listening closely, but I hope you understand: I am opposed to this motion and will be voting against it. I'm tired of the disrespect and the mistreatment of this House and the people of Ontario with the use of time allocation by this government. It has got to stop.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's now 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: It gives me great pleasure to invite and welcome members from OBIO here: Gail Garland, CEO; Michael Cloutier, Canadian partner, Mirador Global and OBIO board chair; Stefan Larson, CEO, Northern Biologics; Jim Graziadei, SVP, Siemens Healthineers Canada (former) and OBIO director; Cynthia Goh, academic director of the Banting and Best innovation centre and OBIO director; and Peter Dans, CFO, Synaptive Medical. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome today the parents and grandfather of my press secretary and my legislative assistant—she does double duty—Jasmine Irwin. Welcome Dr. Tim Lumsden, the grandpa; Leslie Lumsden, the mom; and Bart Irwin, the dad of Jasmine Irwin. Welcome.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to welcome a special guest to Queen's Park: 10-month-old Harley Zoratto, who is here with her mother, Krystina, who used to work in my office. I am pleased to welcome both of them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's my pleasure to welcome representatives from Hypertension Canada who are with us today to host a blood pressure screening and awareness event as part of their World Hypertension Day campaign. We have with us in the gallery the CEO of Hypertension Canada, Angelique Berg; Nadia Khan, who is their president and chair of their board; and Nancy Beshay, director of business development.

I'd like to thank them for being here today and encourage all members to drop by the reception in committee room 228 until 1:30 p.m., where you can have your blood pressure checked.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to the House Kathy Scanlon, executive director of One Care Home and Community Support Services, as well as Sue VanderBent, CEO of Home Care Ontario.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It is my pleasure to welcome the board and staff from MPAC, the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. They are headquartered in the Pickering part of my riding. They're here for their third annual lobby day and meeting with ministers and MPPs from all parties to discuss the 2016 assessment update.

We have the chair, Dan Mathieson; the vice-chair, David Settingington; and board members: Keith Hobbs,

Ken Hughes, Bill Rayburn, Walter Sendzik, Mary Smith, Alf Chaiton, Lesley Gallinger, Bev Hodgson, Don Redmond and Roozbeh Farhadi.

We also have a number of staff members with us, including well-known Kent Emerson and my good friends and former colleagues from other lives in the private sector, Linda Hall and Don Leblond. We also have President Rose McLean.

They have a reception this evening in rooms 228 and 230 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. I look forward to seeing my colleagues there.

Mr. Norm Miller: I would like to welcome Keith Hobbs, mayor of Thunder Bay, to Queen's Park today in the east members' gallery.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to welcome a good friend of mine all the way from Leamington. That's David Settingington, who is here with the MPAC board today, as well as the mayor of Thunder Bay, Keith Hobbs.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm pleased to welcome in the Legislature this morning the family of Pickering page captain Charlene Rocha. With us we have mother and father Nedenia and Cilbur Rocha, along with sister Leilani. Here from India is grandmother Bertha—just raise your hand—aunt Irene, from India as well, and cousin Joshua from India on this very special occasion.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my pleasure to welcome page captain Gurjaap Brar's mother, Ninder Thind. She's in the members' gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Il me fait plaisir d'accueillir Stéphane Giguère.

Mr. Giguère is the CEO of Ottawa Community Housing, providing innovative solutions to vulnerable people in Ottawa.

Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Alicia Eliot and her grade 10 and 11 students from Innisdale Secondary School in my riding of Barrie. Go, Invaders.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's always a pleasure to introduce Mayor Mary Smith of the municipality of Selwyn, in the county of Peterborough, in her role here today as a member of the board of governors of MPAC.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature a constituent and former Queen's Park staffer, Chris Farley Ratcliffe, who is here for the MPAC reception today.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I also want to welcome and introduce members from the Ontario Bioscience Innovation Organization, known as OBIO: Gail Garland, president and CEO; Michael Cloutier, partner, Mirador; Jim Graziadei, healthcare executive; Cynthia Goh, director of the Impact Centre at University of Toronto; Peter Dans, CFO of Synaptive Medical; and Dr. Peter Pisters, CEO of University Health Network.

They will be having their health technology showcase reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. this evening in the legislative dining room. I invite every colleague to visit them this evening.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's always a great day at Queen's Park when two good friends from Ottawa are visiting

here in Toronto. I want to also acknowledge Stéphane Giguère, who is the president and CEO of Ottawa Community Housing, an extremely hard worker, making sure that we have affordable housing in our community in Ottawa; and also, Chris Farley Ratcliffe, who works with MPAC but, all around, is a great guy.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would like to welcome representatives from the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario who are here with us today. I'd like to thank them for the important work they do and for joining us today at Queen's Park. Specifically, I'd like to welcome Mary Alberti, chief executive officer; George Bilof, director, board of directors; Harbhajan Dhillon, director on the board; and Antonella Scali, their policy analyst. Thank you for being here today.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Good morning. I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today the parents of my legislative assistant, Sarah Qinami—Adriana and Ben—and her two brothers, Idi and Stevie. Good morning, and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the Speaker's gallery today, we have with us five interns from Quebec as part of the Jean-Charles-Bonenfant internship program. Please welcome our interns from Quebec.

Bonjour.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Yesterday, the Premier said the leaked Liberal cabinet document was "not the document on which our plan is built." If this is the case, will the minister release the document that their plan was built on? The people deserve to know. Yes or no: Will they do that?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The plan was introduced in the assembly last Thursday. The Leader of the Opposition has already come out and said that he's going to vote against making sure that families, farms and small businesses in this province are going to get a 25% reduction. He also said he's going to vote against giving rural and northern families a 40% to 50% reduction.

When it comes to making sure that we're acting in the short term, our fair hydro plan is going to bring that relief for families, for small businesses and for farms, once we can get this legislation passed.

It has been 76 days since they said that they would have some sort of idea on how to do something. They've actually done nothing since that time. We've brought forward a plan that's going to work for every single family in this province. We look forward to getting this bill passed through the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?
1040

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: My question was about the document, the Liberal cabinet document, a graph that showed that hydro rates are going

to skyrocket in Ontario. We got an answer that was completely irrelevant to the question, so I'm going to ask again.

We have the Premier saying that the document was out of date, that their new plan was built on something else. This is a recent Liberal cabinet document, saying that their plan is going to skyrocket hydro rates. So I would give the Minister of Energy another chance. If this was not recent, if this was not the plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to ask the other side to stop.

Please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This document was not the one they built their plan on, unlike the Liberal cabinet document says. Will the minister release the graph that will show this is not the case? The people deserve to know. Yes or no: Will you release the document?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, come to order. The member from Etobicoke North, come to order.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The 2013 long-term energy plan outlines where our government, with consultation with stakeholders and energy experts, showed where we believed prices were going to go. But what we've done is we've pulled costs out of the system. The \$3.5-billion renegotiation of the Samsung agreement, the cancellation of LRP II: Both took significant billions of dollars out of the system.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you look at where the 2013 long-term energy plan said we were going to be, we've actually reduced that number significantly. This plan that we have brought forward and are hoping to get passed through this House—we want to see that passed because we're going to bring a 25%, on average, reduction on every single electricity bill for families, small businesses and farms. In 76 days, they've done nothing. It just shows: They have no plan for the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Energy: The Minister of Energy quoted a 2013 long-term energy plan. I'm talking about a Liberal cabinet document for 2017. Let's talk about what you're talking about right now. And right now, the Liberal cabinet has a graph that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket and skyrocket and go through the roof. I know that they're doing damage control right now because a whistle-blower from this government exposed this government—that once again, every time they touch hydro, they make it worse.

A third time to the Minister of Energy: If the Liberal cabinet graph is wrong, if hydro rates are not going to skyrocket, will you at least be fair to the people of Ontario and provide us with the new graph, the new document that your plan is based on? Will we have that disclosure, yes or no?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Of course. Just like we did with the 2010 long-term energy plan and the 2013 long-term energy plan, we'll be bringing forward the 2017 long-term energy plan. That will show where we were going to project where prices are going to be. And do you know where they're going to be right now, Mr. Speaker? Some 25% lower than where they were last year, and that's thanks to this government bringing forward a plan that's going to make sure that we help every single family, farm and small business in this province.

Where's their plan, Mr. Speaker? The last I heard is, they were joking that it was in policy development. Now we know that they're going to conjure something up on that magic weekend in November. But what we're doing is making sure that 40% to 50% is coming off for 800,000 families as we make sure that we're helping those in rural and remote parts of our province, and 25% coming off for every family, and 500,000 small businesses and farms.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Based on the Liberal cabinet document leak that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket, I want to ask a very direct question to the Minister of Energy. What will hydro rates be in Ontario in 2022? The document says that they're going to skyrocket. Please correct the record. Tell us what hydro rates will be. What type of increase are we going to see in 2022?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we've been talking about what we're going to do in the short term, which is bring about a 25% reduction—

Interjections.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Oh, I know.

When it comes to the medium term—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: In the medium term, for the next four years, we're holding our costs and rates of increase to the rate of inflation. Then in the long term, the 2017 long-term energy plan will actually dictate where prices are going to be projected. But by 2022, I'm hoping that we might even see something from them that relates to a plan, because I think it will take them that long, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: He had a very revealing remark there. He said, "We're only focused on the short term." Surprise, surprise, Mr. Speaker. What's happening next year? It's an election, and that's what costs Ontarians every time. They come up with gimmicks, they come up with games to create a house of cards, and Ontario ends up paying more. Remember when we had the gas plants? Every time they're concerned about elections and not the long-term costs for Ontario, Ontarians pay more.

Mr. Speaker, according to this Liberal cabinet document, by 2024, electricity prices will reach a record high in Ontario. My question to the Minister of Energy: This document says that we'll reach a record high in 2024. Is that correct? In 2024—your document, this government's document, says it will be a record high. Please tell us otherwise.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: That's incorrect, Mr. Speaker. The 2017 long-term energy plan is still being worked on. We're still making sure that we're going to pull costs out of the system.

I know they have a hard time understanding anything about electricity because they don't even have a plan. They first started talking about a five-point plan, then a three-point plan—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron—Bruce.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: —and then a zero-point plan.

I know the people of Ontario can't wait for a magic weekend in November. That's why we're bringing forward legislation that, if passed, will reduce rates by 25%. That will help families, small businesses and farms. We've got an OESP program enhancement. We've got a First Nations on-reserve reduction. These are things that are helping families. They've got nothing in their plan. They don't even have—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: This Liberal cabinet document that shows hydro rates are going to skyrocket is so disappointing. I think many Ontarians hoped that when the Liberals said they're finally going to address their own hydro mess, maybe we would have seen executive salaries reined in; maybe we would have seen the government say, "We were wrong to collect \$1.3 million in donations from the 30 renewable mega-contracts. That was bad policy." Maybe they would have apologized to Ontarians. Instead, right now, we've got an election gimmick.

As the Minister of Energy said himself, this is about the short term. I'm concerned about the long term. I'm concerned that our hydro rates are going to continue to skyrocket, and their own document says that. Actually, in 2022, it goes up. In 2024, it goes up. In your own document, in 2028, it's going to jump 10%.

Families can't afford this. When are we actually going to address the structural problems in hydro? When will this government actually clean up their own mess?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Structural changes are being done right now by our system operator with market renewal, market reform and a capacity option. We're already two steps ahead of this party on many things.

When it comes to the electricity file, we've even got a plan bringing forward serious reductions for all families.

You know what? A 25% reduction in the short term and in the medium term is something that families in this province want and need, and we're delivering. A 40% to 50% reduction for families that live in the rural and northern parts of our province: That is something they need in the short term and in the medium term, and we're delivering.

When it comes to the long term, the only thing that is going long term right now is that we're 76 days without them putting one iota, one idea, on the table about what to do. We've got a long-term plan coming. The 2017 long-term energy plan will continue to address and pull costs out of the system.

1050

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier is trying to sell the public a bill of goods here. Leaked documents show that she knows that her hydro plan will end up causing hydro rates to soar, but, in the few months that she's been bragging about this plan, she has never mentioned that fact, not once.

Why is the Premier trying to hide the real cost of her hydro plan?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You know, Speaker, we really want an Ontario where everybody has an even chance and where there's a level playing field. We know that when you're worried about your hydro bill, you're not able to focus on those other things that will make your life better. That's why we are reducing electricity prices by 25%. We have a plan. It's an important plan. It will provide relief for people. We are still waiting—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have had a plan—if you want to call it that—from the NDP, and I'm happy to see that they're actually starting to execute that plan, because one piece of that plan was to get the federal government to pay for hydro prices. Now, we're one step closer to having the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton elected leader, elected Prime Minister, and then—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm glad the deputy leader over there is prepared to vote for Jagmeet Singh for the leadership of the Canadian NDP. Who knew that she was a closet New Democrat? She certainly doesn't act like one.

Look, we know that this document was leaked last week. It's a document that this government continues to claim is a document that's out of date. In fact, the Premier uses that language. The minister uses that language. But I have to say that sounds more like, "The gas plants will only cost \$40 million," or "I promise we won't sell Hydro One," or "Nobody tried to bribe anybody in the

Sudbury by-election." That's how the Premier and her Liberal Party govern. They move from one scandal to the next.

Will this Premier stop the cycle of scandals and just come clean with the people of Ontario about the real cost of her borrowing scheme that the people cannot afford?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about our fair hydro plan and, of course, the plan that is actually going to bring forward a 25% reduction to help all families, all small businesses—500,000 of those small businesses and farms—across the province. That's why we've acted to make sure that we have this legislation get through this House, because, if it passes, we're also going to help 800,000 families in rural and northern parts of our province.

I know the NDP and the PCs have already said that they're going to vote against this. They're going to vote against giving families relief now, relief in the mid-term and relief in the long term. Our plan is making sure that we build Ontario up, making sure that we create jobs and build the infrastructure we need and, at the same time, find ways of reducing rates for all people right across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bottom line is that the people of Ontario deserve the facts. The Premier needs to tell families and businesses what the real cost of this borrowing scheme will be. They deserve to know how much Premier Wynne intends to increase the hydro bills, and they deserve to know now. They deserve to know now, Speaker, before the next election. That's when people need the information.

Will this Premier and this minister do the right thing and tell Ontario families and businesses, tell everyone who is sitting in this chamber right now, what the real cost of their plan is going to be?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek will withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Let's talk about facts: A 25% reduction for all families and for 500,000 small businesses and farms in this province. Another fact: 800,000 families in rural or northern parts of our province will see a 40% to 50% reduction once we can get this legislation passed.

The Ontario Electricity Support Program—fact: Increased by an additional 50%, new line items, including more people to qualify for that. Fact: 192,000 families are currently on the OESP program.

Another fact is that we've reduced the delivery line for on-reserve First Nations. That's an \$85 savings for those families. It's a fact that we're making a difference in their lives.

Another fact is that both the NDP and the PCs have said they are voting against this. The other fact is, that's going to hurt every family in this province.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. Last week I was in Sault Ste. Marie, where I met Steve and Lucy Fronzi. Steve and Lucy are business owners. They have a number of Country Style doughnut and M&M meat shops. At each store, their monthly hydro bills are now topping \$2,000; they spend over \$10,000 a month just on their hydro bills.

They've done everything that they can to reduce costs. They've changed all the lighting and they did extra work on their freezers to make them more energy efficient, but nothing is bringing their bills down. How can the Premier implement a hydro plan that will end up costing this hard-working family even more in a couple of years' time?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As we've said, the fair hydro plan applies to small businesses. Many of these small businesses that the leader of the third party has mentioned will qualify for the fair hydro plan and that 25% reduction.

These businesses and these family-run businesses will see that 25% reduction, if passed, and that is making sure that we are helping these small businesses keep more money in their pockets so they can continue to expand and grow, just like we've been seeing other businesses like OutSpoken do in Sault Ste. Marie.

We're going to continue to find ways to help our small businesses in this province. When it comes to electricity concerns, we've even addressed those that don't qualify for the 25% reduction. We've changed the ICI program once again. This will actually reduce the rate of qualification to ensure that thousands more businesses will qualify; again, saving businesses in this province thousands of dollars on their electricity bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Fronzis employ over 50 people in the Soo. They pride themselves on being able to offer good jobs to Soo residents, but with their exorbitant hydro bills they're worried that they're going to have to cut back on staff.

Why is this Premier, why is this Liberal government, forcing good, community-minded employers like Steve and Lucy to choose between providing jobs in Sault Ste. Marie and paying hydro bills?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, as I said, these types of businesses will qualify for the 25% reduction, so that's good news for the 500,000 small businesses that actually qualify for this program.

We're also working with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to make sure that we can get all of the programs that are out to help many of these businesses lower their consumption. When they lower their consumption, they also lower their bills.

The ICI program that I know many of the businesses in the Soo are actually seeing will actually help them lower their bills by up to a third. For those that weren't qualifying before for this program, we lowered the threshold from one megawatt to 500 kilowatts or 0.5 megawatts. That opens up this program for thousands of businesses right across the province.

We're going to continue to work with the chamber of commerce. We're going to continue to work with small businesses to make sure that they can continue to grow and make Ontario prosper.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Steve and Lucy are not alone. All over Ontario, businesses that were promised relief are now reeling from the truth that the Liberal hydro plan is a borrowing scheme that is designed to make Liberal friends rich at the expense of hard-working Ontario families.

1100

Why is this Premier punishing—punishing—Ontario families and businesses with this wrong-headed hydro scheme?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The only two parties that are punishing Ontarians are the opposition parties, by voting against this bill.

How can they say that a 25% reduction today is punishing? It is actually helping families, small businesses and farms right across our province, not only this year, not only next year and not only the following year, but the year after that, and then the 2017 long-term energy plan will kick in. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We're going to continue to take costs out of the system that will see rates drop even more. We found ways to make sure that we can help Ontario families. We're going to continue to do that.

They can talk about magic weekends in November and coming up with policy or ideas that are pie in the sky that don't do anything and don't even take a single cent—neither party has talked about how they can take a single cent off any bills. We're taking 25%, Mr. Speaker, and we're proud of that.

BEAR CONTROL

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Late last Friday, Toronto police were forced to shoot and kill a bear that had wandered onto city streets. Police spokesman Mark Pugash said that they called the Ministry of Natural Resources, but “no one was able to come and help us.” They “were told that there were not any resources to assist them....”

Mr. Speaker, why was no one from natural resources able to help and trap the bear?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much to the member for the question. Public safety is the most important thing in cases like these. Local police made the decision based on the situation unfolding in front of

them. My ministry was contacted that night by police and they provided some advice. They were unable to, for public safety reasons—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It is not safe to attempt to tranquillize a bear at night. The Toronto police made the decision; they were the ones on the ground making the decision. They reached out to my ministry for advice. They provided the information.

I agree it's an unfortunate situation, but these are wild animals. The police and my ministry have a duty to ensure that the public is protected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Back to the minister, Mr. Speaker. Don Cherry had this to say: "I don't blame police"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Feel free to continue disrespecting the Chair.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, come to order—second time.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "I don't blame police because they didn't have the equipment or backup ... It's a dark day and we have to learn from this."

But the government refuses to learn because these dark days aren't all that rare in Ontario. On June 2, 2015, after a bear was shot in Newmarket, the former minister said that nuisance bears were not the responsibility of the MNR and the reason the police had to act was the MNR couldn't work weekends.

This time, MNR said they couldn't work at night. It sounds like the minister doesn't seem to give her staff the resources at all.

Mr. Speaker, when will this government take responsibility? These bear deaths are a direct result of their cuts.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: We have a protocol that we follow in Ontario when working with local police in these situations. We would never second-guess law enforcement's decision regarding public safety.

I want to give a shout-out to our officers across Ontario who protect the public, both police and the conservation officers of MNR.

We were on the phone that night to provide advice. Our ministry officials will go out in the daylight hours to tranquillize a bear. Let me reiterate: It is not safe to try and tranquillize a bear at night.

We would also like to take a moment to reiterate that if you see a bear that poses a threat to public safety, you need to call 911 and your local police. My ministry is always available for advice and support when need be, but I would never second-guess a police decision to make sure that public safety is the most important thing. They provided public safety that night.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Premier promised before the last election to lower auto insurance rates for Ontario drivers by 15%. After the election, she said it wasn't actually a promise; it was a stretch goal.

We know the Premier's hydro borrowing scheme is the same as her auto insurance promise: a political calculation designed to confuse Ontario voters into voting for her party in the next election. Will the government finally admit that this is the case?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question from the member opposite. It's usually something that the deputy leader of the third party would ask. I recognize that he's not available now, but hopefully in time he'll also be able to act and provide some assistance as we move forward, as we are with David Marshall's report to ensure we curb the increasing costs within the system to enable us to reduce premiums. They have been reduced over time, around 8% to 9% now. We're further doing more in order to achieve our goal, and that's an ongoing situation—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm sure the Minister of Finance, along with all members, knows that we do not make reference to someone's attendance in this place.

Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Acting Premier: I hope this time they'll listen to the question.

The Premier needs to figure out another way to get votes. She needs to understand that toying with people's lives for political advantage is not acceptable, and it doesn't work. Ontarians need real relief from skyrocketing hydro prices that the Premier has helped create.

When will she offer the people of Ontario a solution that benefits them, not the Liberal Party?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite knows that a report has been issued. David Marshall has come forward with a number of important recommendations—it's up for public debate—part of which would reduce the costs to the system. I hope the member opposite will take it into account as he proceeds forward to initiate some of this, to reduce those costs and then to enable us to have further reductions in our premiums. It's an ongoing thing that we've always said we would do, and we are doing it. There are about 20-odd companies that have now reduced their rates by more than 15%.

It's a competitive industry and we'll continue moving forward and working with the industry to achieve our goals.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, our government and the not-for-profit sector share the common goal of healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. In my riding

of Davenport, a significant number of constituents rely on local not-for-profit organizations, like the South Asian Women's Centre, that increase self-awareness of women and empower women to develop their social and cultural potential.

Minister, it is crucial to my constituents that they can access organizations that assist to develop their full potential by increasing their economic, social and political standing in society. Can the minister share what the government is doing to strengthen the not-for-profit sector so that Ontarians can continue to access the support they need to succeed?

Hon. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the dedicated member from Davenport for advocating for immigrant women and the not-for-profit sector in her community.

Ontario is home to more than 55,000 registered not-for-profits. Not only do they contribute to every aspect of our society, but they also positively impact our economy. The not-for-profit sector contributes close to \$67 billion to Ontario's economy.

Our ministry supports non-profits through our Partnership Grant Program. Since 2011, we have invested almost \$18 million to help 67 organizations build program evaluation, inclusive leadership and volunteer management capacity.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for her response. It is reassuring to see that our government is committed to strengthening ties with the not-for-profit sector, so that Ontarians can access the resources they need.

I'm sure the minister would agree that the work of local not-for-profit organizations is critical to the success of constituents. Minister, it is important that we continue to support the not-for-profit sector to build capacity by investing in projects that support intra-sector co-operation, communication and networks.

I understand that earlier this year the minister was joined by the member from Newmarket–Aurora at the Blue Hills Child and Family Centre to make a funding announcement. Can the minister tell us how our government is enhancing support for not-for-profit organizations, so that they can continue to assist Ontarians?

Hon. Laura Albanese: The member from Davenport recalls well. Earlier this year, I was joined by the member from Newmarket–Aurora to announce an investment of over \$4 million over two years for 21 grants across the province to support and strengthen organizations, so that they can continue to serve the people of Ontario. This program is essential to building capacity within the not-for-profit sector. The projects being funded will reach over 2,800 organizations, which in turn will assist thousands of Ontarians.

The member from Davenport will be pleased to learn that the South Asian Women's Centre in her riding will be receiving up to \$129,000 to develop a diversity and inclusion leadership strategy and provide essential training to partner agencies.

Our ministry recognizes that non-profit organizations play a crucial role in maintaining the well-being of our society.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. On Saturday, May 6, 17-year-old Tammy Keeash failed to make curfew at her Thunder Bay group home. Tragically, her body was discovered in the Neebing-McIntyre Floodway. Between Saturday and Sunday, no one in her family or the North Caribou First Nation community or the Nishnawbe Aski Nation was notified that she had not returned home. Nobody was looking out for this young woman.

Sadly, in total, four indigenous youth living in group homes have died in the last six months. Why is the minister sitting idly by and letting this happen under his watch?

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for that question. We take these issues very seriously. I can tell you that yesterday the Minister of Children and Youth Services and I spent the afternoon at the native centre on Spadina Road from about 1 o'clock to 5 o'clock, where we discussed the issues specifically surrounding First Nation children and the issues they have in care, being taken into care and how they're dealt with in care.

At that meeting, as I said, were the Minister of Children and Youth Services, myself and the leadership from First Nations communities across Ontario. They shared with us their very frank and very poignant stories. But more than their frank and poignant stories, they threw solutions out. They placed solutions on the table about how to deal with these. I'd be happy to deal with that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate that update, but we have to remember, June 28 marks the one-year anniversary since the Thunder Bay inquiry resulted in 145 recommendations on how to better support indigenous youth in care. One recommendation dealt with the development of policies dealing with missing students, specifically the timely filing of missing person reports. A year later, though, indigenous youth are still dying, and their families and communities have no safeguard.

Today we've seen more calls for action, so I ask the minister: Will you support the call from the Ontario children's aid society and NAN leadership, and call a coroner's inquest into these recent deaths?

Hon. David Zimmer: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member for the question, because this is a really important issue. Like the minister who is responsible for indigenous affairs and reconciliation said, yesterday, we had a very meaningful conversation with the leadership, with chiefs right across the province, here in Toronto. In addition to that, I've been to many different jurisdictions across this

province and spoken to young people and to leaders and elders within communities.

We have a plan, moving forward, when it comes to group homes and children in care, a new blueprint that we will be bringing forward very shortly with some substantial changes. But the most important piece here is returning jurisdiction back to indigenous communities and making sure those communities can care for their children. That's the direction we're moving in.

PHARMACARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday, I participated in the Ontario round table organized by Diabetes Canada. Their number one issue was access to medication and supplies. Diabetes is an expensive disease to manage, and high out-of-pocket costs compromise people's ability to access the medication they need.

Charlene is 60 years old. She buys her insulin in vials and mixes it herself before she injects with a needle in order to save money. She told us that the essential medicines she needs, including her insulin, are costing her \$1,000 a month, and with no public drug coverage, that money comes straight out of her pocket.

Like millions of people in Ontario, 1.5 million diabetic patients need universal pharmacare that covers everyone, no matter how old you are. Why doesn't the Premier do that?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Since we developed a provincial Ontario Diabetes Strategy roughly a decade ago, we've made important changes so that all Ontarians with diabetes will have access to the necessities they need. Out of the 1.5 million individuals the member opposite referenced, my sister, for almost 50 years—in fact, she was diagnosed in her teens as insulin-dependent, so this is an issue that I know extremely well—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Really?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —despite the heckling that I'm receiving from the leader of the third party.

That includes—

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —my sister, who is that age and has had diabetes since 16—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Chair, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —Mr. Speaker. We provide for children's and adults' insulin pumps. We provide for diabetic test strips. We provide, for those who are of limited means as well, on Ontario Works or ODSP, additional supports so that they can manage their diabetes effectively.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, with universal pharmacare, every Ontarian would have drug coverage, no matter how old they are. Universal pharmacare would save the lives of 830 diabetic patients each and every year in Ontario. Ontarians should never be forced to skip

their medications, they should never have to go into credit card debt just to fill their prescriptions, and people like Charlene shouldn't have to worry about whether she can afford the essential medication she needs to manage her diabetes.

Universal pharmacare is for everyone. It is the right thing to do. Why won't the Liberal government do it?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I would implore the third party to stop describing their program as universal pharmacare because it's anything but. What would that member say to the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the over 4,000 days that the leader of the third party has been in this Legislature, prior to a couple of weeks ago, she mentioned the word "pharmacare" three times. One reference was in reference to an op-ed—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: You've been doing nothing for 14 years in government—14 years.

Interjections.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wrap up, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In those more than 4,000 days, one was in reference to an op-ed that I wrote on pharmacare, and the second was in reference to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which was likely an erroneous reference.

Mr. Speaker, our pharmacare begins—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, this past weekend marked Children and Youth in Care Day across Ontario. May 14 every year is a time for all of us to recognize these young people's contributions to the province, as well as their strength, bravery and resilience. These young people have our government's full support, and I know the minister has a long history of advocating for children and youth in this province to help position them for success and also to help them to thrive.

As my neighbour, the minister is quite familiar with my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt and has met with many children and youth to hear about their concerns on safety, access and child welfare issues.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please provide some insight on how the government is helping children and youth in care?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for this question, but I also want to thank her for her advocacy on this issue. In fact, it was her private member's bill that established this day

to be recognized here in Ontario. Thank you so much for all of the work you've done.

As the minister responsible for children and youth services here in the province of Ontario, it is an absolute privilege for me to get out across the province and meet young people. There are so many young people I've met who are in care with lived experiences who are working towards building a better Ontario for the next generation of young people who live in care.

We're currently working on a very comprehensive piece of legislation, which members of the House know about, to reform the child welfare sector here in this province so every single young person has the opportunity in this province to reach their full potential.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Minister. I'm very pleased to see that with Bill 89, many young people have added their voice—before going through the legislative process of this House. We just finished the committee stage, and it's now coming back to the House for third reading. Our government knows how important this legislation is, and we want to get this right.

I also know the minister has listened closely to the feedback from those who appeared before the standing committee, especially young people, sharing their experience both at the public hearings and throughout the consultation process. Our government's amendments to the bill also reflect some of the feedback on the bill.

Minister, can you please share with the House how Bill 89, as amended, would impact youth in care, should the bill be passed?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member is correct that we had the opportunity to get out there and engage with a lot of young people, and they provided a tremendous amount of insight into the changes that they thought were necessary at the beginning stage through the consultation over the last few years to build the initial legislation, but also through the committee amendment process.

This bill is such an important piece of legislation. One of the pieces that I think is so important is that it raises the age of protection and will now protect 16- and 17-year-olds who may be vulnerable and need support.

In addition to that, it will improve oversight for service providers, including children's aid societies, so that children and youth receive consistent, high-quality services right across this province. It will affirm the rights of children and require service providers to uphold them.

Most importantly, it upholds Katelynn's Principle, clearly stating that every child has the right to be heard and respected.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: We have now seen 10 months of turmoil in Ontario's processing vegetable market. It's incumbent on the government to work through a process consistent with the needs of both growers and processors

while supporting regulated marketing and supporting the growth of Ontario's processing vegetable industry. The 2017 crop negotiations are wrapped up. There's more work to do.

When will we see your government's promised economic impact study—it has been 10 months now—and when will we see the establishment of the industry advisory committee?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for a very thoughtful question this morning. We, of course, had issued regulation 440, a process that we're working through. We had a particular challenge this early spring with the tomato crop in the province of Ontario. We appointed one of the most distinguished people in the province of Ontario, a former agriculture minister, the honourable Elmer Buchanan, who served so well in this House from 1990 to 1995, to act as a trustee. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a court case that is potentially pending. Because that court case is potentially pending, I can't comment any further.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, look, the vegetable processing industry has invested thousands of dollars in land, labour, plant and equipment, machinery, and information. We mentioned regulation 440. The growers and the processors have now negotiated a minimum price, and terms and conditions of agreement for the coming season.

However, planting, irrigating—harvest is looming, with the attendant need for oversight of grading, filling contracts and adjusting contracts, ever mindful of the vagaries of weather and other externalities. Minister, growers need their elected and trusted organization back to ensure orderly marketing. They need the representation with directors, committees, support staff. When will we see the election of directors and when will we see the appointment of staff to make the required decisions during harvest?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his supplementary question. We were faced with a situation where we wanted to make sure that we protected a crop in 2017. We wanted to protect family farms and we wanted to protect the processing industry, which is so important to agriculture in the province of Ontario. We appointed, as I said, one of the most distinguished people in agriculture in the province of Ontario today, the honourable Elmer Buchanan. He acted as a trustee. He was able to negotiate contracts to make sure that we got those crops planted in the ground and potentially harvested, for a robust sector of that part of Ontario's agriculture. I take the member's representation this morning, but there is a pending court case and I can't comment any further.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. One out of every 10 workers in the province of Ontario makes minimum wage, which has not kept pace

with the rising cost of almost everything. Some 70% of Ontarians want to see a \$15 minimum wage. Yet there was nothing in the budget, and the minister has made it clear there's nothing in the Changing Workplaces Review report. New Democrats listened, Speaker. That's why we have committed to increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for over a year now. Will the Acting Premier commit today to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for the workers in this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for this question. There obviously is discussion right throughout the North American continent on minimum wages these days. What we've done as the government—we want to make sure that every family in this province is able to benefit from the economy of this province. The economy is robust. We're leading in economic growth amongst the G7. Ontario is doing well.

We need to ensure that every sector and every person, from high-income earners to low-income earners, are earning their share in that economy. That's why we implemented the Changing Workplaces Review: to make sure that we took a look at all the labour relations aspects, all the employment standards, that have been raised by organized labour, by business and by poverty advocates throughout the province of Ontario.

I hope to come back to the House after the report is released, once the public has seen the report and is able to digest it, with some changes that I think really meet the needs of those hard-working Ontarians who rely on a sense of decency in Ontario's workplaces.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: For over a year now, New Democrats have been committed to the \$15 minimum wage. Again, last week, we asked this Liberal government: Will you commit to this wage? We asked again on April 25 and we asked again on March 8 and we asked again on February 23. Any time this Liberal government has been asked if they'll raise the minimum wage, the minister's answer has been the same: "Ontarians want predictable." No, they don't, Speaker; they want change. Hard-working Ontarians deserve a \$15 minimum wage. Will this be another stretch goal, or will this government commit today to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

1130

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I want to thank the member again for that question. Obviously, as I said at the start of the previous answer, Speaker, this is a topic that is being discussed all over North America. When you look to our neighbours to the south, you're seeing changes implemented on a city basis, on a state basis. When you look to our own country, you're seeing changes that are being made on a provincial basis. It's about protecting people's wages. It's about protecting their ability to earn a good living.

Speaker, we've gone through a review that has looked at employment standards. We have looked at labour relations in the province of Ontario, to make sure that we fully understand the ramifications of what we do.

What the Premier asked me to do in the mandate letter was to take a look at workplaces today and make sure that the legislation is up to date, and do it in a way that Ontario business can remain competitive.

The NDP has referred to this as a waste of time. I could not agree more. It's very important.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the minister responsible for early years and child care. Minister, I am proud that our government is committed to ensuring that families have access to quality and affordable child care all across the province.

But I hear over and over again from my constituents about the struggle to find child care for their children. There is an acute shortage, and while we have addressed the issue of non-refundable wait-list fees that I raised in a private member's bill, more supply of affordable spaces is required. As the MPP for Beaches–East York, I want to ensure that we are providing child care options for all of the families in need across the province.

Speaker, will the minister responsible for early years and child care please tell us all what the government is doing to make sure families' needs are going to be met?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Status of Women and responsible for early years and child care—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask that those kinds of things not be said, please.

I need a response.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Beaches–East York for this important question.

It's vital for families to have access to quality, affordable child care, and we know that this can be a challenge for families. That's why I'm proud that our government has a plan to modernize the way we are delivering child care.

The 2017 budget reaffirmed our government's commitment to help 100,000 more children access affordable, quality, licensed child care, and we're starting immediately, with an investment of \$200 million for the 2017-18 year. This funding supports the creation of 24,000 more spaces for children. It will provide immediate relief for families, reduce wait-lists, encourage reduced fees and increase subsidies. This investment will be felt by thousands of parents searching for affordable, accessible child care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to the minister for her excellent work in trying to provide more daycare spaces for constituents right across the province. It's encouraging to know that our government is working to address the needs of Ontario families. I know that I'm working very hard with local daycare providers like Debbie Visconti, the executive director of Community Centre 55, to identify new locations in Beaches–East York for

affordable daycare. I know that families in my riding are excited to see that new, non-profit daycare spaces are being created.

I recognize that there is a lot more work to be done, but people who are involved in the child care and early years sector are keen to see how the system will be modernized. We've heard about the 100,000 new spaces being created, and our government's swift action will help provide families with access to child care that they need right now.

Speaker, will the minister please explain to us and tell us more about the way in which our government plans to transform child care in the long term?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to answer the member's question. My ministry and I have been working hard to support the needs of families when it comes to early years and child care in Ontario.

We know that providing spaces is not enough, which is why we are developing a renewed early years and child care framework to help transform the entire system. Speaker, we want to help families get the support they need, whether they choose to stay at home with a young one or use child care. This framework will include an affordability strategy to create long-term solutions.

As you know, we held consultations in 20 different Ontario communities and heard from close to 8,000 people. The needs of families in this province are diverse, and I'm pleased to say that we will be sharing the details of our framework in the coming weeks. The 2017 budget commitment is just the start.

RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. It has been over five years and four MNRF ministers since I first asked about the future of Rondeau cottages. Now, there's less than a week to go before the Rondeau cottagers return to see what repairs are needed after the winter. Their leases are set to expire in less than eight months. If no decision is reached, your Liberal government, Minister, will force them to tear down their cottages at their own expense after December 2017. These cottagers need to know answers now. Cottages are in need of repair.

Minister, you've delayed on this decision for far too long. Speaker, to the minister: Will the minister commit today to extending the leases for the cottagers?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. As he knows, the 20-year lease was set to expire December 31, 2017, and our government has been taking steps to allow existing private cottage lots in Rondeau Provincial Park to continue until December 31, 2038. But a final decision will be informed by consultation, environmental and economic studies and an environmental assessment. That's where it rests right now: with the Ministry of the Environment, which is doing an environmental assessment.

It's an approach that's intended to balance the interests of public cottagers and demonstrate fiscal responsibility

while protecting the environment in Rondeau Provincial Park. We will continue to work with the cottagers. We understand time is of the essence, but, at the moment, the file rests with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Wow. How many more environmental assessments have to be done? Years ago, I was told that the ministry was waiting for the last environmental and economic study to be finished before they could make a decision. And I don't think that it's fair to compare Rondeau to Algonquin; Rondeau has a sound and solid community who are excellent stewards of the land.

The studies are done, but still no answers. After many years, the deadline is fast approaching and the government seems no closer to making up its mind. These cottages have been in families for decades, so with the lease deadline fast approaching, these cottagers need answers now.

To the minister: Why are the Rondeau cottagers still waiting for an answer from this government? Precedence has been established for a 99-year lease. You might know that, too.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: This is a very complex topic. There are many different stakeholders; some are for keeping cottagers in the park, yet there are other organizations and other stakeholders that are against keeping cottagers in the park.

My ministry has been working alongside the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to be able to see some of the conditions that will be required if the cottagers have an extension past December 31, 2017. We have requested an independent third-party peer review of the environmental reports that have been prepared by the ministry to ensure the findings are accurate and balanced.

The reports were revised to address comments received, and the conclusions of the report don't change. The environmental reports indicate that cottage lot structures and activities contribute to pressures on park values, such as rare and sensitive habitats, species at risk and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

CHILD PROTECTION

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. In February, fire swept through a foster home near Lindsay, killing 14-year-old Kassy Finbow and Andrea Reid, one of the caregivers. This tragic event highlights several serious concerns about foster and group homes. Four aboriginal youth living in group homes in Ontario have died in the past six months: Kanina Sue Turtle, Courtney Scott, Amy Owen and Tammy Keeash.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation has called for inquests, as well as the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies has

said “a full understanding of prevention strategies that need to be implemented” is required.

Speaker, this is a crisis with our most vulnerable children. Will the minister institute mandatory inquests into the deaths of all children in care?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you to the member for asking this important question. Last week I had the opportunity to go up to Timmins. I met two of the families who have lost children in care. Mr. Speaker, any time we experience the death of a young person here in the province, it saddens everyone here in this Legislature.

To answer specifically the question that the member has asked, whenever a child dies in care, we want to make sure that we take the appropriate steps necessary to prevent similar tragedies from ever happening again.

That’s why our ministry and the Office of the Chief Coroner have joint directives in place so that an investigation is conducted whenever a child dies in care. Based on the findings of these investigations, the coroner provides recommendations that each children’s aid society has to follow.

So there are steps in place. The member opposite knows that when we actually—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Labour on a point of order.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I’d like to correct my record in answer to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo today. At the end, I said that I couldn’t agree more that the Changing Workplaces Review was a waste of time. Obviously, I meant I couldn’t disagree more that the Changing Workplaces Review was a waste of time.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The chief government whip on a point of order.

Mr. James J. Bradley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce in the members’ gallery—he was there, at least—the mayor of St. Catharines, Mayor Walter Sendzik, who is here with MPAC today.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I just wish to acknowledge some students from Bowmanville High School who were here earlier.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I’d also like to welcome a representative from MPAC, Kaitlin Potts. There’s no relation.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Haldimand–

Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs concerning the processing vegetable market. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

2017 ONTARIO BUDGET

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On April 27, 2017, Mr. Sousa moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On May 8, 2017, Mr. Fedeli moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on April 27, 2017 “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following “that this House” and adding thereto the following: recognizes that Ontario has not balanced the budget and in fact contains a \$5-billion operational deficit financed through one-time revenue sources and cash grabs, and \$10 billion in new debt, and therefore the government has lost the confidence of this House.”

All those in favour of the amendment, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Oosterhoff, Sam
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Brown, Patrick	Horwath, Andrea	Sattler, Peggy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul	Yakubuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles

Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to acknowledge a very valuable member of our legislative team, Jessica Lippert. It's her birthday. Happy birthday, Jessica.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 39; the nays are 53.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the amendment lost.

We now come to the motion of Mr. Sousa that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr. Sousa's motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Brown, Patrick
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Natyshak, Taras

Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 39.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried. Be it resolved that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry concerning Rondeau cottages. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: As many of you may know, May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Today, I stand on the shoulders of the many people in my riding who suffer from Lyme disease. Lyme disease is real, Lyme disease is in Ontario, and people are suffering from it.

For those of you watching right now, Lyme disease is a tick-borne disease that is spreading rapidly through Ontario and Canada. In fact, it is the fastest-growing vector-borne disease in North America. Health Canada predicts that by 2020, 80% of the population of eastern Canada—this is including Manitoba and Ontario—will live in a tick-endemic area.

On Saturday, May 27, Lyme Ontario will be hosting its second annual A Walk for Hope. Lyme Ontario is a charitable organization that seeks to support patients with Lyme disease and to increase public awareness. They work hard to educate the public about the preventive measures that should be taken when outdoors.

On May 27, they will be hosting a five-klick walk at Beachway Park, in Burlington. This walk helps to raise awareness, as I said, for the disease, and all donations go to Lyme Ontario to continue the research, education and support.

Lyme disease is an important issue in Ontario. As I said, it's real. People suffering from Lyme disease in this province deserve to be attended to, as opposed to being pushed into the States for treatment.

Please join me in continuing to help raise awareness for this dangerous disease.

VIJAY BHATIA

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to pay tribute to London West constituent Vijay Bhatia, a veteran London taxi driver whose life was brutally taken on April 29.

Vijay was a 64-year-old grandfather and father of four who is lovingly remembered as a family man with a big heart; a man of peace who always had a smile on his face; a gentleman who exemplified what it means to be a good person and a caring citizen.

Vijay's roots in our community are deep. Born in India, he immigrated to London and began a long career in the taxi industry. He was a dedicated husband and father who worked hard to support his family and put his children through university.

Since his passing, I have heard stories about his eagerness to plan family trips, the advice he gave to his children to put family and friends over money, his generosity to young people making their way in the world, and his friendliness to the passengers he drove in his cab.

Earlier this month, over 500 people attended Vijay's funeral, and another 100 participated in a memorial walk and vigil, including taxi drivers from as far away as Guelph, Mississauga and Toronto, demonstrating how many people Vijay touched and helped in a life that was so senselessly and tragically cut short.

On behalf of all MPPs, I wish to express our sincere condolences to Vijay's family, friends and colleagues. He will be greatly missed, but his spirit and decency live on.

BRAMALEA FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Ms. Harinder Malhi: On Sunday, May 7, the church in my riding at 355 Howden Boulevard marked a milestone with an anniversary service. I was excited to join the congregation at Bramalea Free Methodist Church to celebrate their 35th anniversary in the city of Brampton.

With celebrations throughout the morning, Daisy Wright, a friend and parishioner at the church, had invited me to join her, along with her family and other parishioners, at the milestone celebrations.

The church's genesis can be traced to the spring of 1980, with the start of a Bible study group that later became the BFMC on May 2, 1982. Over the years, the church and its congregation have become part of the roots of our community.

Currently, the Assyrian Gospel Church and the Tamil Free Methodist Church share the space.

Members of the church have served globally, beyond the borders of Brampton, including the last three and a half decades where the church has offered assistance to organizations and individuals in their times of spiritual, emotional and physical need.

In 2015, the church launched a community garden and distributed vegetables and other produce to several not-for-profits throughout Brampton. More recently, the congregation, including the Sunday school children, jointly wrote a book, *Conversations of Grace: Testimonies of Blessings, Faith, Miracles and Courage*. This book includes personal stories of the contributors to strengthen, encourage and inspire others.

I would like to once again give a big congratulations not only to all the members of the church, but also

Reverend Dennis and Christa Ball, lead pastors of the church. Congratulations on your 35th anniversary.

TONIATA HAPPINESS PROJECT

Mr. Steve Clark: If there's one thing we need more of in the world today, it is happiness. I rise to recognize the amazing kindergarten students at Brockville's Toniata Public School, who are bringing joy to their corner of the world. It's called the Toniata Happiness Project.

Across the community, people are discovering sun rocks just like this one. Three hundred brightly coloured stones were hand-painted by 56 Toniata kindergarten students under the guidance of teachers Johanna Charbonneau and Julie Hunt, and ECEs Donna Ross and Amy Brown. The sun rocks have appeared in businesses, parks, doctors' offices, the local hospital and even the mayor's desk at city hall. Today, I'm very proud that they've made it all the way to Queen's Park.

It's a wonderful idea that's captured the hearts of our community. As people discover the sun rocks, they're taking pictures and sharing them on Facebook with the hashtag #ToniataHappinessProject. I encourage everyone to do a search and I challenge you, I challenge everyone, not to smile and have your heart warmed by what you see.

When the students started this project in January, they wanted to make people feel a little better about their day. To them I say, "Mission accomplished." These young students have taught us a lesson: that no matter your age or size, we can all help make the world a happier place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It makes me happy.

ST. CLAIR COLLEGE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We're having a big homecoming weekend in Windsor. Can you believe it, Speaker? St. Clair College has been around for the past 50 years.

Friday evening at the main campus, the Windsor Symphony Youth Orchestra is putting on a free concert. The public is invited, and volunteers will give tours of the campus.

Saturday morning, there's an alumni and friends golf tournament at the Donald Ross-designed Roseland golf club, but if you weren't one of the first 144 people to enter, you're out of luck; it's all sold out. That's in the morning. Later, there's a jazz band, dining with a four-course meal and dancing, with the added feature of duelling pianos. There's even a disco Saturday Night Fever event, and that's all at the St. Clair College Centre for the Arts. That evening will be capped off with a huge fireworks display across the street in Dieppe Gardens.

How about a 50th anniversary brunch on Sunday morning? And, Speaker, for you, there is a senior's discount.

Sunday evening, take a stroll back in time with a 1970s-style coffee house. Numerous talented local artists will perform at the Student Life Centre, including Kelly

Hoppe, Greg Cox, Ed Everaert, Tom Markham, Phil Kane and Scotty Hughes.

Later this year, St. Clair College will graduate its 100,000th student. Some famous alumni include Mary Jo Haddad from the SickKids hospital here in Toronto; Ray Tanguay, who is a former CEO at Toyota Canada; and Andy Faas, a vice-president at Shoppers Drug Mart.

Congratulations to St. Clair College president Patti France. Have a great homecoming weekend.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was going to call the member out of order on that. I wasn't sure.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Mr. John Fraser: The Schizophrenia Society of Ontario is holding their annual lobby day today, and I'd like to acknowledge a few people with us in the gallery: Mary Alberti, the CEO of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario; George Bilof, a director on the board of directors; Heather Skelly, a member of the society's speaker's bureau; as well as Jesse Bigelow. We had a great meeting before we resumed here just a few minutes ago, and I heard some very important personal stories as well as what the society is advocating for.

Schizophrenia affects one in 100 people across every race, culture and socioeconomic group, equally occurring in men and women. Over 140,000 people in Ontario live with the disease.

This brain disease does not discriminate; it impacts everyone. Schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders are severely stigmatized, misunderstood and often feared. It is a serious but treatable mental illness. Recovery is possible. With proper treatment and support, individuals, along with their family and friends, can live happy and fulfilling lives.

1510

May 24 marks National Schizophrenia and Psychosis Awareness Day in Canada. For over 30 years, the Schizophrenia Society of Canada has provided schizophrenia- and psychosis-specific supports for people suffering from the illness, making a positive difference in the lives of people, families and communities.

As a community, we need to work together to reduce the stigma and better educate ourselves about the illness. I encourage my colleagues to meet with representatives from the Schizophrenia Society, who are here today, to learn more about the important work they are doing in our communities.

SOUTH SIMCOE POLICE CHIEFS

Mrs. Julia Munro: It is my pleasure to rise today to both thank South Simcoe's outgoing police chief and welcome our new one. Recently, South Simcoe police chief Rick Beazley announced his retirement. I would like to first and foremost thank him for his many years of service and for his ongoing dedication to our community. He is a pillar of South Simcoe and will be missed. On behalf of all residents of York-Simcoe, I wish him the very best in retirement.

I would also like to congratulate our new chief, Andrew Fletcher. Chief Fletcher comes to this new role with ample experience, most recently as deputy chief of South Simcoe, but also as deputy chief of Halton. I wish him the very best in this new role and look forward to getting to know him over the coming months.

Chief Fletcher also serves as a co-chair of the Simcoe County Local Immigration Partnership, a member of the Innisfil Rotary Club, a supporter of Special Olympics Ontario, and he has coached youth soccer. He is a past board member of the Reach Out Centre for Kids, a non-profit charitable organization that serves both children and youth.

Once again, thank you to retired chief Rick Beazley and welcome to our new chief, Andrew Fletcher.

PEARSON AIRPORT RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. Yvan Baker: Recently the Greater Toronto Airports Authority began construction on one of its runways and rerouted most of the flights over my community in Etobicoke Centre. As a result, noise levels in my community from airplanes have reached an unacceptable level at all hours of the day.

I am disappointed that the GTAA planned this massive project without consultation and without communication in advance with my community. The GTAA falls under federal jurisdiction and our federal MP, Borys Wrzesnewskyj, is doing excellent work in this regard. But let me be clear: I will do everything possible as a provincial representative to advocate for my community.

At a recent meeting with GTAA officials, I indicated to them a number of things. First, the noise levels that my constituents have had to endure have been unacceptable. Second, the GTAA must expedite the construction and immediately do everything possible to reduce the noise from flights in my community. And going forward, the GTAA must start working in partnership with the community on issues that impact us. This includes the noise caused by the construction; it includes night flights; it includes something called the Helios project, which I now understand could increase the number of flights over our community; and the desire by the GTAA to build a transit hub.

To me, working in partnership means consulting well in advance on issues that impact the community, it means collaborating with the community to find solutions that address our concerns, and it means ongoing transparency and communication with our community.

In the lead-up to the runway construction, the GTAA did not do any of the above and did not treat the surrounding communities with respect. The GTAA is now eager to build a transit hub at the airport that requires provincial funding and support. I have made it clear that I will not support the GTAA's aspirations for a transit hub until I am confident the GTAA will work in partnership with the community on night flights, the Helios project, noise management, the transit hub and any other issues that touch my community in Etobicoke Centre.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Norm Miller: In Sundridge, David Clemmer and Stéphane Aubin are the owners of Northridge Inn and Resort, a charming vacation getaway on the shores of Lake Bernard in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka.

They have done everything right as a business. They completed an energy audit and spent \$200,000 in renovations to conserve energy and limit heat loss. Despite that, their winter hydro bills this year were \$14,000 a month. With hydro bills like that, they can't afford to operate in winter. As a result, they will not be opening their doors for the next winter season and will have to lay off 40 full-time and part-time workers. In a town of 961 people, 40 jobs is a big loss.

Just down Highway 11, the village of Burk's Falls' council is considering shutting the arena during the winter months to cut costs. The arena, like many across northern Ontario, is struggling with increased hydro costs.

Speaker, this is another small town of less than 1,000 people, and the arena is central to community activities. If small businesses like Northridge Inn and community hubs like the Burk's Falls arena continue to decrease their operations, it will be devastating to the local economies and the residents of these small communities. This is particularly true in the winter months, when jobs are in short supply in our area.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated May 16, 2017, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017 / Projet de loi 96, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2017 sur la prévention de la traite de personnes et les recours en la matière.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 127, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi 127, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 11, 2017, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SKAS AUTO SERVICES INC. ACT, 2017

Mrs. Martow moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr66, An Act to revive SKAS Auto Services Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The President of the Treasury Board is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 63 and 64 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 63 and 64 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

APRAXIA

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all children in the province of Ontario deserve every opportunity to reach their full potential; and

“Whereas speech and language pathologists in Ontario are afforded the capabilities to provide a diagnosis of childhood apraxia of speech and receive specialized mandated training; and

“Whereas intensive and frequent individualized professional speech therapy, multiple times weekly, is needed to facilitate verbal speech; and

“Whereas school-aged children with severe and significant speech and language disorders like childhood apraxia of speech are not receiving the quality or quantity of speech therapy outlined as essential by current evidence and research, by either CCACs or school boards;

1520

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the government of Ontario to declare that May 14 is Apraxia Awareness Day.”

I totally agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Matthew.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This is a petition entitled “Widen Highway 3 Now.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in Essex county.”

I couldn't agree more. The time has come. Let's get it done.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

“Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

“Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

“—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

“—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low-income adults and seniors; and

“—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario.”

I sign the petition and give it to page Kenna.

LYME DISEASE

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic

and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I’m happy to affix my signature and give it to page Maddy.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here signed by, among others, Thérèse Bain, from New Liskeard.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many families are forced to deal with mental health and addiction issues in rural areas of northeastern Ontario without access to trained mental health care workers; and

“Whereas both medical and psychological treatment is difficult to access in smaller communities and many patients fall through the cracks in the system; and

“Whereas rehab centres and support networks for families and individuals are limited to larger centres such as Sudbury or North Bay;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To provide immediate and appropriate mental health care and addiction treatment to individuals and their families in the rural and remote areas of northeastern Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly agree. I affix my signature and send it with page Maggie.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

“Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

“Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for all residents of high-rise buildings who experience constant breakdowns, mechanical failures and ‘out of service’ notices for unspecified amounts of time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Urge the Ontario government to require repairs to elevators be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge this government to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity–Spadina and across Ontario.”

I agree with the petition and send it down to the table with Kaitlin.

BRUCE POWER

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bruce Power provides low-cost electricity to Ontario families and businesses;

“Whereas the life extension program is expected to see \$980 million to \$1.2 billion in direct and indirect labour income annually, through the purchasing of equipment, supplies and materials;

“Whereas 90% of spending is in Ontario, supporting hundreds of businesses throughout the province;

“Whereas the economic benefits of Bruce Power span far beyond the local region, and will create opportunities throughout Ontario’s nuclear supply chain, contributing to a reliable energy supply over the long term;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To support the vital role that Bruce Power plays in delivering clean, affordable electricity while creating new jobs, supporting community economic regional development, and helping drive the local economy in Huron–Bruce.”

I totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with Emma.

POLITIQUES ÉNERGÉTIQUES

M. Taras Natyshak: J’ai le plaisir d’introduire une pétition :

« Réparez Hydro maintenant

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Entendu que les factures d’électricité sont devenues inabornables pour un grand trop nombre de personnes et que la réduction des factures d’électricité de 30 % pour les familles et les entreprises est une cible ambitieuse mais réaliste; et

« Entendu que la seule façon de réparer le système hydro-électrique est de s’attaquer aux causes de base des prix élevés, y compris la privatisation, les marges de profits excessives, la surabondance d’électricité et plus; et

« Entendu que les familles ontariennes ne devraient pas avoir à payer des primes du temps d’utilisation, et celles qui vivent dans une région rurale ou nordique ne devraient pas avoir à payer des frais de livraison plus élevés et punitifs; et

« Entendu que le retour de Hydro One comme propriété publique remettrait plus de 7 milliards de dollars à la province et à la population de l’Ontario;

« Nous, soussignés, offrons notre soutien pour réduire les factures d’électricité pour les entreprises et les familles jusqu’à 30 %, éliminer les délais d’utilisation obligatoires, mettre fin aux coûts de livraison rural inéquitables et rétablir la propriété publique d’Hydro One. »

Je l’appuie. Je vais la signer et la remettre à la table avec Jeremi.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the events in Asian countries during World War II are not well-known;

"Whereas Ontarians have not had an opportunity for a thorough discussion and examination of the World War II atrocities in Asia...;

"Whereas Ontarians are unfamiliar with the World War II atrocities in Asia;

"Whereas Ontario is recognized as an inclusive society;

"Whereas Ontario is the home to one of the largest Asian populations in Canada, with over 2.6 million in 2011;

"Whereas some Ontarians have direct relationships with victims and survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, whose stories are untold;

"Whereas the Nanjing Massacre was an atrocity with over 200,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers alike were indiscriminately killed, and tens of thousands of women were sexually assaulted, in the Japanese capture of the city...;

"Whereas designating December 13th in each year as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario will provide an opportunity for all Ontarians, especially the Asian community, to gather, remember, and honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, urge the members of the Ontario Legislature to pass Bill 79, declaring Dec. 13 as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day."

I fully support the petition and give the petition to Gracin.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas rural schools play an integral role in their communities by attracting new people to small communities and providing education; and

"Whereas rural schools are so much more than schools to these communities because they provide a community space for a number of activities; and

"Whereas rural communities have faced hospital bed closures and forced industrial-scale energy project construction among other policies that the government has pursued which stifle growth in rural communities; and

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"Whereas the current accommodation review committee process is being forced through on a shortened timeline and only after the government made regulatory changes that make it easier to close a small rural school;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That an immediate moratorium be established on the accommodation review committee process, that planned school closures be halted and that government be forced to consider the long-term impact closing these schools will have on the communities they serve."

I believe in this, and will sign it and send it to the table with page Gurjaap.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office;

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment;

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss;

"Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount;

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

"Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

I totally agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Katie.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to present this petition from the good folks from my hometown of Belle River that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Belle River's privately operated Service-Ontario centre shut down in January 2017 because the second owner in four years has given up operating it; and

"Whereas the government is considering applications to let yet another private owner take over the operation of the centre; and

"Whereas the people of Belle River and surrounding communities have a right to reliable business hours; and

"Whereas the people of Belle River and surrounding communities have a right—where they live—to the full range of services available only at publicly operated centres, in addition to health cards and driver's licences, such as:

"—registering a business;

"—filing Employment Standards Act claims;

"—submitting Landlord Tenant Board documents;

"—entering Ministry of Natural Resources draws; and

"Whereas the closest publicly operated office is 30 minutes away in downtown Windsor; and

"Whereas the residents of Belle River and surrounding areas pay the same provincial taxes as other Ontarians and, therefore, have a right to equal access to quality services; and

"Whereas the only aim of publicly operated centres is to provide the best possible services to the people, while the sole goal of privately operated services is to generate the biggest possible profit for the owner;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services instruct ServiceOntario to immediately and permanently open and staff a public ServiceOntario centre in Belle River."

I agree and send it to the Clerks' table with page Noah.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to rise and submit a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity prices have increased and in too many cases become unaffordable for Ontarians;

"Whereas Ontario is a prosperous province and people should never have to choose between hydro and other daily necessities;

"Whereas people want to know that hydro rate relief is on the way; that relief will go to everyone; and that relief will be lasting because it is built on significant change;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would reduce hydro bills for residential consumers, small businesses and farms by an average of 25% as part of a significant system restructuring...;

"Whereas the Ontario fair hydro plan would provide people with low incomes and those living in rural" and remote "communities with even greater reductions...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:"

All members of the House, please support "the Ontario fair hydro plan and provide relief for Ontario electricity consumers as quickly as possible;

"Continue working to ensure clean, reliable and affordable electricity is available for all Ontarians."

Speaker, I certainly agree with this petition, and send it down with Jeremi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 16, 2017, on the motion for allocation of time on the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / *Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d'électricité équitables et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, you're a very kind and observant man.

It's an honour to rise to discuss this time allocation motion. As you're well aware, Speaker, the Liberal government is about to incur a liability in order to get through the next election, a liability on behalf of the people of Ontario of \$40 billion—\$40 billion. We're not talking small change here; we're talking about significant cost. Just as a comparison, the total debt of Ontario was calculated to be \$332.4 billion as of March 31 of this year, so we're talking about an expenditure that will be more than 10% of the value of the total of the province's debt.

Given the scale of that, you would think that this would be a discussion that would go on for some time. This is a substantial debate. This isn't a minor item. We're not talking about dog-walking parks. We're not talking about Bring Your MPP to Work day. We're talking about real substance here.

Instead of having proper public consultations, extended debate and hearings in different parts of the province for something that is not inconsequential, what we have is a time allocation motion before us that allows public hearings for one day; that's going to be May 24, from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

In order to let people know about this—this consequential day, the only day they're going to get—there will be notices posted on the Ontario parliamentary channel and the Legislative Assembly's website. There will be a note put out on Canada NewsWire—not bad things, Speaker, but, frankly, it is fairly common in this place to actually put ads in newspapers to let people know that something substantial is going to be debated. There's going to be none of that.

In fact, today is the 16th. The time for requesting an opportunity to speak will be up this Friday at 1 p.m. That's it. Let's assume this gets passed today and let's say there's going to be a vote after question period tomorrow. So, Wednesday afternoon there will be notification, maybe Wednesday afternoon, maybe Thursday, and by Friday at 1 p.m., that's it—cut off. People can't get on the list to speak before a parliamentary committee to actually put forward their assessment. Then, after that, there will be approximately a day for debating clause-by-

clause before this comes back for—I think it's 20 minutes per party to discuss the bill at third reading.

We're talking about a very substantial decision that will give this government a number of years of reduced prices and a reduction in the political heat on hydro and give the people of Ontario a massive hangover: 26 years of soaring bills, bills that, after this four-year interlude is over, will go up sharply and will plateau, substantially higher than we otherwise would have paid. It's not a minor decision.

This party, we in the NDP, talked to the Liberals a few months ago, raised this question in question period, and said, "You know, you shouldn't leave this to the last minute. This is of consequence. This is of consequence." I can only think that, two months ago, the government House leader and the Premier knew that this session would come to an end. I suspect they had access to the parliamentary calendar. They knew that June 1 was probably going to be the last day of the session, so they knew that their time was limited and, if they were going to have a full public debate on a substantial matter, that they should bring it forward. Yet they left this major financial decision to the last eight sessional days, and they are now jamming it through with this time allocation motion.

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I can only think, Speaker—and I think it's the only logical explanation—that they understand that they don't want any public scrutiny on this: as little as they can possibly get away with. You can understand it: They're operating in a threatening political environment. Their polling numbers are way down. They have an election coming up in a year, that doesn't promise to go well for them. There's this desperate need to pour oil on the waters—about an Exxon Valdez-worth of oil—calm it down.

They have a plan that exudes an unpleasant odour whenever it's poked, one that people notice. So when you put a whole province in hock to get through an election, you can expect that it may not be well received when people actually get to go through the numbers and the details. When you ignore a profound problem, when you ignore the roots of that problem and decide that the way you're going to approach it is to pave it over with bundles of \$20 bills—bundles of \$100 bills—you can expect that the public won't respond that well when they actually get to scrutinize, when they actually get to hear exactly what is on offer and how it's going to affect them. You want it left alone, in the dark, undisturbed by human hands, and that is exactly what this time allocation motion is about.

Speaker, they want this left in the dark until the revamped hydro bills show up at people's homes. As you may well understand, this bill gives the government the power to rewrite those hydro bills, so the Premier herself can dictate what your hydro bill is going to look like.

You can bet that there will be a prominent line on the bill saying this is the amount you saved because the Premier, in her infinite wisdom, stepped in to save you from hardships, not noting that she herself was a signifi-

cant player in causing those hardships. But we will see that.

Speaker, I wouldn't be surprised if each hydro bill didn't come with one of those little computer chips that you get in birthday cards that play a little song, so that when you open that bill, you'll hear this blare of trumpets, and you will see before you—behold her great works—"I cut your bill by 20 bucks."

Mr. James J. Bradley: What a good idea.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I note that the member for St. Catharines applauds the idea. It's dangerous to give Liberals good ideas, because they may well actually blow the bank on doing that.

They understand exactly what they're doing in wanting the power to rewrite the hydro bills, to use them as campaign literature. That is a big chunk of what's going on here.

Speaker, you can be certain that on these rewritten hydro bills, there won't be a line that says, "And in a few years, you're going to be paying all this back." There won't be a line saying, "For every dollar that's reduced today, you'll be paying back \$2 tomorrow." They won't be saying that you'll be paying this bill at a very high rate. You get my drift.

Jamming this bill through at the very last minute is completely typical of this government. It doesn't like the idea that electricity plans get public scrutiny. It's contrary to where they're at.

You may well know the history of electricity planning in Ontario. You may well know that at one point—and they were called demand/supply hearings—there was a process that required public presentation before a tribunal, with the ability to have those plans scrutinized and have the decision-makers cross-examined, and an opportunity to actually dig deep and see what was on offer.

That was at one point, Speaker. That got abandoned when the Liberals came to power in 2003. They brought forward another process. They restricted that process, and they made it tighter. But they still required that a plan be brought forward by the government of the day that would go to the Ontario Energy Board, where, again, at a tribunal, the decision-makers would be subjected to cross-examination by interveners and interested stakeholders.

Speaker, that matters. In the late 1980s, early 1990s, there was a lot of talk about building three, four, five more nuclear reactors in Ontario. You have to understand that the desire of the construction industry to build more and more was huge.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, actually, Jim, it was the Liberals at the time. But Speaker, that was contested in those hearings. That was contested and governments of the day had to recognize that their plans were way out of whack.

In fact, Speaker—and I know this won't surprise you—many people in Ontario think this is a reasonable statement. Tapping the wisdom of the people is a good

thing for a society: listening to people, giving an opportunity to them to actually get down into the nuts and bolts of a decision and thinking and looking for the errors, looking for the opportunities, and improving that plan.

I think everyone in this chamber would agree that it's always better to have the public brought in to hear their commentary—it doesn't matter whether you like it or not, but to have as many good minds as possible focused in on what's going on, so that you can get the best possible decision.

This government doesn't particularly like that. It came forward with its integrated power supply plan, which to my knowledge, Speaker, never had a full hearing. That was replaced by the long-term energy plan. At each stage, the amount of public scrutiny was made smaller and smaller and smaller, until at this point we have a system in which the government goes out and asks people what they think, but doesn't actually present them with a plan that they can critique. And so you've got things turned on their heads: the public trying to understand where things should go, put forward their best thoughts—that's a good thing, that's a positive development—but they don't actually get to question the product that eventually comes out of the government.

This plan before us, this bill, will have limited hearings. There will be no opportunity for intervenors to question the Minister of Energy or any of his officials. There will be a very limited window for hearings, a very limited window for debate. In fact, that's happening right now. We're debating cutting off debate. I don't think that's a good idea. I think it's a mistake. Then when we get to third reading after the limited public hearings, after the greatly reduced time for going through the bill on a clause-by-clause basis, what have we got? Something like 20 minutes per party to speak about the bill at the end.

I would say, Speaker, that you and most people in this country wouldn't think that's very democratic. It may follow the letter of the law, but it certainly violates the spirit of the law, without any doubt.

This year's long-term energy plan, I understood, would be coming forward in the spring—well, February is not spring; March, April—and that there would be an opportunity while the House was in session, even with all the limitations the government has put on it, to actually have some discussion, maybe not formally in this chamber, but while we're all here, an opportunity to go through the numbers, critique the plan and talk to the media. Increasingly, what I'm hearing from the government—and I look forward to hearing whether my sense of it is correct or not—is that it's going to be a few more months before it comes forward: I would say, given everything that has happened before, probably at 6 p.m. on June 30.

Given that July 1 is a national holiday, I would say that with their habits, 6 p.m. on June 30 would make complete sense. Bring it forward in the summer while people are away. Let it vaporize in the media for a few hours and then be gone. So the ability of the people of

this province to critique what's going on is dramatically limited.

The bill before us is one that borrows a large amount of cash to make bills look good in the year going up to an election and sticks the people of the province with tens of billions of dollars in debt that they'll have to pay for years. It's a bill that reduces the oversight of our regulator. As weak as that oversight may be, it is weakened even further.

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This is not a bill that is in the interest of the people of Ontario. It is in the electoral interest of the Liberal government. That is why it's before us. That is why it is being jammed through. Speaker, we should all vote against that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: I can't believe that we're here debating time allocation on this bill. I am so frustrated that we're here debating this bill and time allocation on a bill as important as this one is.

The government has decided this week that the House is going to be under siege and we're going to pass their bills because, as I've said in the past, this government couldn't manage a two-car funeral. But what this government is intending to do right now is put time allocation on a bill the likes of which has never been seen before in North America. I want people to understand just how important this bill is, because clearly the backbenchers in this government don't get it, or they would take the time to scrutinize this bill. They do not get it. This is a \$28-billion bill—\$28 billion—and they sit over there and treat it as if it's nothing, because they don't have any respect for electricity customers in Ontario. They have no respect. Every piece—

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: You don't want to get me going this afternoon, because what this is doing is burying electricity customers in debt for the next 30 years. You guys need to realize it on the backbench, because you're being used. You are being used by a Premier who has hit rock bottom.

Every piece of government legislation being debated will also be time-allocated. The government has decided that the House is only necessary insofar as it can use the willing votes of its own backbenchers to shut down debate and prove that the House really isn't necessary. I find it so hard to believe because their constituents sent them here for some reason, Mr. Speaker; for some reason they sent them here.

Members have a right to debate matters before the House, but this government this time is proposing to borrow \$27.7 billion in new debt and store it at Ontario Power Generation—which, keep in mind, has never happened before. We've never seen anything like this in North America. Then they're going to recoup the debt, the interest, and whatever new fees and commissions—they're going to pass them on to electricity customers down the road.

We've never done anything like this in the province of Ontario. This government expects us to ram it home in just a couple of hours of debate, in a couple of days, with no scrutiny. And they don't have the answers themselves. They don't have the answers to our questions—very, very valid questions—on how in the heck we're ever going to pay for this.

Even when the government time-allocated the budget earlier this week, at least the House had complete information on financial statements that it was being asked to vote for. Here, the only financial information we have on this bill—this massive \$28-billion bill—came from a whistle-blower. That's the only information we have: from a whistle-blower. Somebody over there, who isn't elected, understands what this bill is all about: \$28 billion. I want you to try and wrap your head around that for a minute.

The government first decided to dispute whether the document that we got from the whistle-blower was real. Then, after being challenged on that, they changed their argument, and suddenly the document was real but it was out of date. But have we seen any new numbers or up-to-date numbers?

The government's public position is that the only financial information that the members have on which to base an opinion is inaccurate. The government has provided no updated financial information to counter that document.

When we spoke to ministry staff yesterday—and thank you for the briefing—they couldn't tell us how much we were going to pay in interest. They couldn't tell us who was creating the financial product—the bond that's actually being sold—so we have no idea how much you'll be paying bankers on your hydro bill for the next 30 years.

Why is this important, Speaker? Because you don't sell these things without a cost. What the budget tells us on page 240 is that we will have paid bankers over \$188 million for the Hydro One sale.

This is three times bigger than that—three times bigger than the Hydro One sale. That means that if you just take the cost of what we paid out to sell Hydro One and multiply it, Ontario ratepayers are going to end up paying more than a half-billion dollars in fees and commissions on their hydro bills for the next 30 years, and that's only if you don't count the interest in the total fees and commissions.

At least when we sold Hydro One, at least when Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals sold Hydro One, something they campaigned against, that came out of general revenue. The structure of this legislation is such that the same is not possible here. Those costs have to be paid by OPG. Because that's true, they'll either be paid as part of the new debt retirement charge on steroids, which is what the legislation envisions, or they'll be paid as part of an OPG rate application. In either case, you'll have no choice but to pay for every last one of these expenses on your hydro bill.

I want to give a sense of exactly what \$27.7 billion buys you in the electricity system. You could refurbish

Darlington twice. You could build the Lower Mattagami project 10 times. You could upgrade the entire 500 kV network, from the high-voltage, direct-current intertie with Quebec right into downtown Toronto, eight times with the money they're blowing on this Liberal election platform. According to the customer that the government uses for their modelling, you could pay every hydro customer's bill in this province for 34 months with the money they're wasting on this deal, and we've got three days to look at it. It's garbage. It's arrogance. It's unbelievable, is what it is.

Ontarians will get not one electron of new power out of this bill. They'll build not a single thing that will make the power system more reliable, more flexible or more carbon-free. What they'll get is a massive new cost that will be with them until my kids, who are teenagers, are in their forties—a new cost for kids who are in their teens now when they're in their forties. I'll be 77 years old by that time, if I make it, Mr. Speaker. That's what they'll get out of this bill. The fact that we're being asked to make that commitment on six hours of committee time and a half-hour debate at third reading is insulting to everyone who cast a ballot. It's insulting to everyone who holds a seat in this House. It should be insulting for the backbenchers and the government members as well, because they don't have the numbers themselves. They don't have them.

This brings me to the real focus of the debate this afternoon, which is time allocation. I'm not going to stand here and quote the member from St. Catharines and what he said over the last 40 years, because that would be embarrassing. It would be embarrassing for the actions of this government when you're dealing with something as important as this is, and I have no idea how the members of the government have no understanding of the magnitude of this decision they've made.

But I do think that the constant use of time allocation lowers the status of this place because it conveys only one message, and that's what Ontarians already know: that this Premier doesn't care to listen to them. The Premier doesn't care what their opinion is. This Premier doesn't care what the opposition says. Nearly every government bill which has passed in this session has faced time allocation, whether it was required or not. There exists no belief on the part of the government that the opposition can even contribute to legislation—none. Opposition amendments are rarely included at committee, and we have no reason to believe that they will be here, because they're rushing it through in six hours of debate on a \$28-billion borrowing scheme.

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This is the fundamental problem here. It's not even that the government is diminishing the role of the House. It's the fact that the government is refusing to give members essential information, and then asking them to make a decision on it, to blindly support something that they don't even have answers for themselves. It's arrogance: Vote on a \$28-billion debt issue. Do so without essential information that shows the impact that it will

have on ratepayers, and then do so with six hours of committee and a half-hour debate at third reading.

I hate time allocation. I have never been in government. I hate time allocation, I really do, because it limits what we can do as elected members representing our constituents. I'd rather go home at night, but I'm stuck here Monday through Thursday. Many of the government members are not.

But in the event that the roles are reversed a year from now, you had better hope that I am not sitting in the seat next to the government whip, acting as government House leader and dictating the schedule of this House, because I will keep you here every night until midnight. I will keep you here every night until midnight, because what the people who elected you sent you here to do was to properly scrutinize bills. You will not like it, but you will debate. You'll never go home, but you'll debate, because that's the job that we were sent here to do.

It's a \$28-billion bill, with a couple of hours of debate. That's it. You have killed debate in this House. You've killed it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I've got to give a shout-out to my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings for his remarks. He rarely gets that emotional. I've sat with him here for years, and I can't blame him for bringing passion to the debate, because it's a reflection of what we're hearing in our communities. It's a reflection of the contempt that people back in our ridings have for this government and their actions in relation to not only hydro, but the general state of affairs when it comes to the finances of the province.

Time and time again, when given the option to make the right decision, to do the right thing, to take the long road and to explain fully what it means to run a capable, competent and respectful government, they do the opposite. Today we see the effects of that: a time allocation motion that truncates debate on what could end up potentially being a \$28-billion debt to generations to come for their mistakes on the hydro file.

Speaker, it's something that is hard to wrap your head around. For the general public, when we get into these large numbers and these big figures, they can't understand that this type of money even exists, that a government can so freely and easily burden the people of this province with that much debt. And how can you blame them, Speaker?

If folks take a look at the status of affairs right now—we know that hydro has never been more expensive in this province. That's a direct relation to the actions on the part of the government. When it comes to their efforts to privatize the system, it has only increased the overall cost of the system.

We see that reflected in the 2017 budget as well. If you look at the numbers for 2015 through 2016, 2016 through 2017, and 2017 through 2018, their efforts on the part of privatizing Hydro One will add \$188 million just for the administrative costs. On the line item it says,

"Transformation related to Hydro One: \$188 million," to accountants, to consultants, to people who are going to make a whole lot of money off of selling our most valuable asset.

Speaker, we've counselled the government, we've implored them, to keep that asset public to ensure that the people who invested in our public utility continue to benefit from it; but to manage it accordingly, to make the reforms that are needed, to ensure that the CEO doesn't make an exorbitant salary, and to ensure that rates are reasonable and competitive with other jurisdictions. But they have been asleep at the switch.

And here we are today, where they find themselves in a precarious political position, where the Premier of the day has an approval rating lower than that of Donald Trump, even in Canada. Recent polling on the President of the United States as it relates to Canadians showed Donald Trump with a 16% approval rating; our current Premier has a 12% approval rating.

There are more similarities than that low approval rating. There are more similarities between these two governments. We're looking across the border, to our friends to the south, and we're seeing a presidency that's fraught with internal resistance, where folks that work in the White House for the current Trump administration are having to leak documents to warn the people of that country of some of the actions that are happening under his presidency.

We've just seen that from this government. Some brave soul, whoever that person is, who had that cabinet document in their hands and decided "This information needs to get out"—I want to thank them. That's a brave thing to do. It was an important thing to do. It should send shockwaves through this government that that's the state of affairs now; that decisions are being made without proper consultation. I doubt the majority of the members of the government were fully briefed and fully informed on the ramifications of this bill, and to this day we see that none of them have any answers. They don't have any answers as to how much this actually is going to cost. All we have to rely on are these leaked cabinet documents.

We know some of the basics, Speaker, out of the bill. We know that oversight through our various oversight bodies will be reduced. It reduces the oversight through the regulators. That stands to reason, because while they privatize the system, they'll want to water down any oversight for those private industries when they become the operator, as they become the overall manager and distributor of the system. They won't want a government hanging over their shoulder. All the more reason for them to have sold off 60% of it.

Now, I have to lay a little bit of criticism to our friends in the official opposition. They certainly are passionate about this debate and have come to the table defending our public utility, Hydro One, but their plan calls for selling 49% of that valuable asset, only 11% less than what the Liberals have currently sold off. So it's difficult for me to connect the rationale on that side, because I

can't see any different of an action coming from the Conservatives.

People in our communities are suffering. There's absolutely no question about it. They continue to call our offices. They continue to express their dire situations in that nowadays their hydro utility bill is their largest expense. They can't make ends meet and they're struggling.

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Small businesses in my community of Windsor and Essex county have to make the decision as to whether to reduce their hours, to serve food, to grow food—we've got greenhouses in Leamington and Kingsville that are now making the clear decision—and it's an easy decision for them to make, given the costs that have come down on them from this government—that they can no longer afford to grow in our communities. They've gone down south to Ohio and to Michigan and set up multi-million-dollar facilities, creating jobs and sustainability. That's something that we're missing out on, and it's something that this government is wholly neglecting.

Speaker, the Premier just doesn't seem to get it. She doesn't realize that kicking the can down the road on the increased costs of hydro is only going to burden further generations. A \$28-billion debt is simply like refinancing your credit card or your mortgage, paying the minimum balance—and people know. People are savvy to this. They understand that this is simply a ploy for their re-election campaign.

We're 12 months, I believe, outside of the next election—around there. This is their last-ditch effort to make some move on the failures that we've seen over the last 16 years or so, and people aren't buying it. Come down to Windsor and Essex county and present your plan. Have a town hall. I will rent the hall. We'll invite everybody. Present this plan.

Speaker, I listened to our leader, Andrea Horwath, this morning on AM800 with Lynn Martin, and Andrea fully dissected this government plan for what it was: a cynical ploy to buy votes with the public's own money. But what was more telling was not only the easy dissection of this, but when people called in afterwards to reflect and to relate their stories—they're not buying this. It's clear that the Premier has lost the confidence of the majority of the electorate in this province.

So for them to make this drastic move, knowing that they don't have the support of this province, burdening future generations with a massive debt load and not even coming close to attacking the root issues of the problem with hydro in this province—the expansion of privatization, the oversupply problems that we have, and the distribution problems to rural and northern Ontario. None of this bill addresses any of those problems—nothing.

What it simply does is refinance a debt over a longer period of time, which will ultimately result in us paying more. You're going to get four years of minimal relief out of this bill, enough time for them to rearrange the deck chairs. Possibly there will be a leadership contest, but they're trying to buy four years of relief, of electoral

acceptance, with this bill. I can tell you, Speaker, that people are not buying it. They don't want it. They see through the cynicism of this. They see it as cynical, and they want a real plan. They want to know that the asset that we've paid for, invested in—I hear the Minister of Energy stand up and talk about the investments that have been made into the system, over \$50 billion of investments, of public dollars, taxpayer dollars that have been invested in the system. Yet, you're selling 60% of it for \$9 billion, so where's the other \$41 billion worth of value? Where's the other \$41 billion that we've put into the system?

Your valuation of that 60% of the asset is so low, it discounts that generation of investment that people have put in. We own that system. We've invested in it. It is ours, and you're selling it off and have sold it off at a fire sale to cover your own hides and to play a little bit of a shell game with the people of this province. They justify it by saying that they need that money and are going to use that money for investments in infrastructure around the province. Never has a government ever needed to sell off an asset as important as Hydro One to finance infrastructure. We've always been able to do it under traditional models, and we've done it well. This is a government that has found no other way—cannot find another way—to support our infrastructure needs for our communities.

Speaker, I've got a road in my area, Highway 3, that has been on the books for over 20 years in terms of its need to be completed. If they couldn't do it back then, how do we expect them to indeed finish the job that they started?

This bill is so transparent and obviously a ploy by this government to try to pull the wool over the eyes of the people in our ridings, to get them to turn away from the real issues, to temporarily forget about the damage that they've caused to this province and to our overall system, and to lend their support one last time. It is the Hail Mary of all Hail Marys. I have not seen, I don't think, in this House or any other House this desperate of an attempt to retain power.

It is apparent in their lack of confidence in themselves that they have time-allocated this motion. They want to ram this thing through as quickly as possible.

They were quick out of the gate with advertisements. We saw the ads for this bill well, well before we even saw the bill. We saw the ads all over the place for it: the Fair Hydro Act. Well, what is the Fair Hydro Act? "Well, you'll see it soon. We're going to present it soon."

Now, with eight days left in the Legislature, we get it on the table—a truncated debate. They're going to jam this thing through and go hop-skipping through the next dog days of summer, touting this terrible plan.

But we're not going to stand for it. We're proudly going to vote against it. As New Democrats have and always will, we have presented a comprehensive plan that people understand, that is true to the needs of the people, that is honest with them about the challenges ahead and that doesn't blanket over what needs to happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Ballard has moved government notice of motion number 30, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I heard a nay.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

What did you vote? Did you vote "aye"?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): You voted "aye." All right.

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Okay, there we go.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 30 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, May 17, 2017." It's signed by the chief government whip, Mr. Bradley.

Vote deferred.

1620

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes, that the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That only those amendments to the bill which had already been filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, shall be considered; and

That on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto, with one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a) being permitted; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, May 18, 2017; and

That, in the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 30 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The minister has moved government notice of motion 29. I return to the minister for further debate.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I believe the parliamentary assistant to health will be making further remarks later in the debate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, this reminds me of a quote from the famous baseball player Yogi Berra: It's like déjà vu all over again. Here we are doing the exact same thing that the government put forward this morning. We're dealing with a time allocation motion, only this time it's on a different bill. Again, this government—they don't even want to debate. They did the same thing this morning, where the mover said, "The parliamentary assistant and the minister are going to speak later." Do you know what? The only chance that they're going to have is the 30 minutes of debate that are going to be dealt with on third reading, because I'll guess that none of these people on the government side are going to have the nerve to stand up and defend the indefensible. They're not going to stand up and talk about why they're ending debate on this.

The minister, who was featured on a Global exposé last week, was the one who moved the motion. Basically, we're dealing with Bill 87, which is a bill from the Minister of Health. Get this, Speaker: This notice of motion 29 under standing order 47 has the Legislative Assembly committee sit tomorrow. This committee normally meets on Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m. This motion programs that committee to meet from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., not to hear public hearings, not to gauge comments from members of the Legislative Assembly, not to have a discussion in committee about the merits of Bill 87 or what they've heard from stakeholders or to have a deliberation about what should be added or not; they're going to deal with clause-by-clause amendments for the bill that have been filed with the Clerk by 12:45 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17. Right now, Speaker, we're at about 4:25 on Tuesday, so this motion which we'll debate and we can debate for up to two hours now empowers amendments to be filed 15 minutes before this committee is going to meet.

Do you know what really makes me think? I go back to the throne speech, when we all got brought in here in July 2014, when the government talked about being open and transparent. They talked about transparency and accountability. In fact, I can remember one of the lines that was in the speech. It talked about putting partnership over partisanship. Isn't that a laughable statement coming out of this government, now that we've seen how they want to govern by time allocation motion? It doesn't matter whether it was the time allocation motion we just finished dealing with on Bill 132—their hydro plan, the one that they've spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe millions of dollars, advertising before they even placed the bill in the order paper.

So now they've got another bill that's before a committee that normally meets every Wednesday. You can almost set your watch by the Legislative Assembly committee. I have been on the committee umpteen times since I became a member in 2010. It's a three-hour committee. Tomorrow they're going to meet for six hours to deal with clause-by-clause for amendments that were filed 15 minutes before the committee meets, and then it's going to be reported the next day to the House. Then there will be half an hour, 30 minutes, for third reading. Does that sound like a government that wants to put partnership over partisanship? I don't think so.

In fact, I'm going to give you three words that I think exemplify what this government is like: deadlock, dysfunction and gamesmanship. That's what I think about this government. Those are three words that I think categorize this government and the way they operate. They talk a good game. They always talk about good words and listening to people and consulting people, and yet, when the rubber hits the road, third reading debate is half an hour. There's a day's notice on Tuesday for a meeting on Wednesday, and we'll throw together some amendments and put them forward.

This is not the way this government claimed that they were going to be operating. I wished that I could have had a discussion here this afternoon with the member for St. Catharines, because this morning I read a couple of quotes from him, some of the quotes that he's made in the House over the years about time allocation. The one I quoted this morning—I'll actually quote it to you again because it applies to this bill as well. He made it on December 11, 2001:

"This is indeed an interesting bill, but what's even more interesting right now is the time allocation motion that faces us. For the people who are watching this perhaps on their television sets at home, I should clarify that. That is the choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation."

Well, you know what? There's going to be no more debate on legislation at second reading for Bill 87. There's not going to be any more discussion in committee from stakeholders. They're going to go right to clause-by-clause. They're going to go right back here to the House on Thursday and they're going to allow only

30 minutes for that final discussion—wanting meaningful debate on the government. At the time, in December 2001, the member for St. Catharines used the word "unfortunate" when categorizing a time allocation motion.

I hope the member for Beaches—East York—he's a very prolific speaker in this House, and he's smiling at me right now, so I'm sure that he's going to stand up and impart some of his wisdom on the democracy of the Kathleen Wynne government. You know, if I was to categorize the member for St. Catharines, if he still believed what he professed in 2001, he would call the use of time allocation anti-democratic and I would tend to agree with him.

1630

He did acknowledge in 2001 that that's not the first time government has used a time allocation. In fact, standing order 47(a) allows a government to do that. But this government has a real issue listening to the public.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Minister of Children and Youth Services can sigh all he wants, but facts do matter. Facts do matter, and deciding to choke off debate on a bill, a bill that many stakeholders are imparting information on—many stakeholders are indicating that there are some measures that they like, but there are also some measures that stakeholders have indicated to our critic that they don't like. But the government doesn't want to hear those negative voices. They want to bring this bill through committee without debate. They want to bring it back to the House with as little debate as possible and then move forward. I wouldn't be surprised, Speaker—we've dealt with two time allocation motions today; I believe that we'll probably be dealing with more before this government rises.

It has real difficulty managing its legislative agenda. I used my comments a few days ago about this government's lack of planning and organization when it came to one of the House leaders' meetings that we sat in—myself and the member for Simcoe—Grey and the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke—where the government actually indicated that they wanted two bills that they hadn't even introduced yet, that they hadn't even talked to the critics about. They hadn't even disclosed the details of those bills, yet they wanted to make sure that they got them through the House with as little debate as possible. They don't want to hear those dissenting voices.

They don't want to go out of this Legislature to hear from constituents. They certainly didn't want to on the bill that just closed off debate that we just divided on and we'll be voting on tomorrow, the time allocation on Bill 132. Every time we brought up hydro stories, you ran to your House leader, you ran to your whip and you said, "We need the Tories and the New Democrats to stop talking about those hydro horror stories. We need you to use time allocation"—because you didn't want to hear from those dissenting voices.

In terms of Bill 87, I think every member of the Legislature has got at least one email—most likely hundreds of emails—from one of my constituents. His name is

Arnold Kilby. He's from Lansdowne. His daughter, Terra Dawn, passed away, and he's asked all of you—all of us, all 107 members of the Legislature; 106 right now—to protect patients. He's written to us about the experiences of his daughter, how she was released, how he had great difficulty getting information from the hospital, getting information from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. He actually stood out front with a number of people who have lost loved ones in care in the province, and he can't get an answer. In fact, sometimes when he would write the minister, instead of the minister emailing him or responding, he'd end up with an OPP officer at his front door because he was so distraught.

I would be too. If I lost one of my kids, I would probably feel the same way. I would be distraught that I lost someone that I loved so much. He's had every door that the health care system could slam in his face slammed in his face. He's tried through every means possible to get justice for his daughter, Terra Dawn.

I have read this bill and I don't see that the justice that Arnold Kilby has wanted is in Bill 87. If I were to call Arnold before this guillotine motion, this closure motion, was tabled before the House and I said to Arnold, "Do you support this government choking off debate, closing voices of dissenting Ontarians?" he'd probably not be surprised at this government. He so much wanted justice for his daughter. He so much wanted someone in this government to acknowledge that the system doesn't protect patients.

The fact that his frustration, whether it was with the review board, the coroner's office, the Ministry of Health or the system at the hospital, every time, mostly the CPSO—I can't get over what this man went through to try to get expert testimony tabled before that board, so much so that I tabled my own bill. I tabled Bill 29, which was actually as a result of some discussions that Mr. Kilby had with Alan Shanoff, who is a lawyer and at the time was a columnist with the *Toronto Sun*.

It caused a lot of people to step up and take notice of what happened. Some of it was unintended consequences. I heard from health care providers about the provisions in that bill. But it got the conversation going, and I think that's what Arnold has always tried to do.

Some of you have emailed me, or called me or spoken to me in the hallway, and were really concerned about Arnold and some of the emails that he sent. I remember getting a call, when André Marin was the Ombudsman, from one of his staff asking me if I talk regularly to Arnold because, as he said to me one day in my office—as someone who has kids, I can't imagine what he has gone through over those many, many years of information not being provided about justice not being served from our system.

You know what? If this bill solved those problems, I'd be the first one to say, "Let's get it through the House. Let's get it through as fast as possible." But that's not what this bill does. I just have a real problem with us spending our whole legislative day today—really, that's all we've done, right? All morning we dealt with the time

allocation motion on Bill 132. It ran into the afternoon, and we're now dealing with this second motion from this government, so we've taken the entire legislative day to just talk about this government's desire to get their bills passed and get out of here for the couple of months we have as a break. I just think that's not the speech that I heard from the throne when we were elected.

The other thing that they said at the time was that they were going to put evidence in front of ideology. Just like I haven't seen them put partnership over partisanship—in fact, with the government House leader's office, I see the opposite; it's partisanship first and partnership last. We've had a situation in this House, a past practice over the last little while, that we've been able to, in the last couple of weeks of the session, actually pass some meaningful bills and have three parties that could co-operate on some things. So I'm very, very disappointed.

The final thing that I want to talk about today is a quote that I didn't read this morning. I referenced it, but I want to read it now. It's a quote from the member for St. Catharines, Jim Bradley, the dean of the Legislature, who will be celebrating on, I believe, May 30, his 40 years in office. It's a quote that I want to read from the member for St. Catharines from May 30, 2001:

"I regret that we are dealing once again with yet another time allocation motion, which is a motion that chokes off debate in the Legislative Assembly. It is my observation after a number of years, and I think talking to people who have observed this Parliament for a number of years, that it has been diminished so remarkably by this government that it has become almost irrelevant. That is most unfortunate, not simply for those of us who sit in the opposition or for the combatants who are of a partisan nature in this House, but for the democratic institution that indeed it has been in the past."

Speaker, that's very telling given what this government is doing in this last session.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Stop whining, Steve.

1640

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to continue, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, to quote Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines, from May 30, 2001:

"It was once a significant institution, in my view. I remember, as a person before I was elected, coming and sitting in the public galleries. Those were the days where you didn't have somebody blocking you at the door and making you get passes and so on. You simply had to sit in the public gallery and watch the debates that took place. And we did sit in those days; the House did sit both in the daytime and sometimes in the evening, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

"If you listened to the debate in those days—I'll say, admittedly, that there are always those who view the past as perhaps being better than the present, but I had a number of students who have gone through the Hansards and read some of the speeches and noted that indeed they were very good speeches in the House in those days. They were more lengthy than they are now, in many cases, so that ideas were able to be elaborated upon.

There was a greater detailed analysis of legislation that took place, not only in the House in Committee of the Whole, because often we went to committee of the whole to deal with clause-by-clause, but also in committees of the Legislature.

"I think it was more ecumenical than it is today."

I remember one of the bills that the government had laid out. I actually asked for unanimous consent to go into Committee of the Whole so that we could deal with our amendments that had been turned down. But also, if the government wanted to deal with their amendments that they tried to get by UC, we could debate them in the Committee of the Whole House. I note that the member for St. Catharines talked about that in 2001, that that was something that was done on a regular basis, especially when you had a more substantive committee system, where the government actually wanted to hear from Ontarians, where the government actually wanted to go out and tour Ontario to hear those voices.

The final quote from the member for St. Catharines goes on: "Today the strongest person is the party whip. The party whip simply tells the members of the committee what shall happen, and it happens. That's unfortunate, because on all sides I think members have something to contribute: the opposition to concede when the government has made moves that are acceptable and good, and the government members to find problems that might exist in government legislation. But that is virtually gone. It is virtually dictated now by the Premier's office. The speeches we hear in the House tend to be speeches which seem to originate from the government caucus service bureau, and I understand the need for some research for speeches, but they are virtually meaningless, because they can't influence the government or the procedures that take place. That's most unfortunate."

I think the member for St. Catharines was right. It's ironic that he's now the government whip, the person he talked about in 2001 who had all the power. But I do think that this government has taken cutting off debate, choking debate, to a new low. I just can't believe it, given the fact that this Bill 87 affects the Animals for Research Act, the Elderly Persons Centres Act, the Health Insurance Act, the Immunization of School Pupils Act, the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, the Ontario Drug Benefit Act, the Pay Equity Act, the Public Hospitals Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act. It deals with so many acts; why would the government, in this case, want debate choked off?

I can't understand why this government can't accept voices from Ontarians or from the opposition that have a differing view. This was a government, remember, that in that famous throne speech talked about partnership over partisanship. It's a bunch of malarkey.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, Steve. So whiney today.

Mr. Steve Clark: You know what, Speaker? If the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change wants to use some of the government's 40 minutes to speak on this, sir, have at it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to add what's left of my voice to this debate. If I start to cough too loudly, I apologize to the people from Hansard. I don't mean to hurt your ears, but I have this cold that just doesn't seem to know when to leave. So here I go.

This comes kind of as a surprise to me, although it shouldn't.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Liberals will bring time allocation on your cold.

M^{me} France Gélinas: On my cold? This would be a good idea.

Interjection: We'd approve of that.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes.

It's kind of weird because with Bill 87, the Protecting Patients Act, we sat down at a subcommittee meeting, we worked together—all three parties—and we agreed as to what would be a good schedule to do this. We allocated four half days for deputations. We all agreed together that we would start the deputations as early as we could and we extended the time for deputations on those four Wednesday afternoons when the committee regularly sits so that we could hear from more people because the demand to speak to this bill was really huge.

We agreed on a system that every week at 9 o'clock on Monday we would get the list of everybody who had asked to present and who had not been scheduled to present; each party would prioritize who they wanted to hear from. This repeated itself four times to give as many people as possible a chance to be heard. I must say, Speaker, though, we still had dozens and dozens of people who wanted to be heard but never had a chance to do so. We did receive many written submissions, some of them from the people who had wanted to present to us but were not able to do so, but some we will never hear from.

We also agreed as to how we would do clause-by-clause. Right off, when the bill was first printed, it didn't take long to realize that there were some flaws and there were some what I would say were just mistakes in the bill that we all recognized needed to be corrected. Together, at the subcommittee, we decided that we would have two afternoons of clause-by-clause and that should allow us to get the job done.

The subcommittee brought their report to the full committee. The full committee listened to it. The Liberals have a majority on committees, like they have in the House. They listened to that plan, they agreed to it and they voted in favour of it.

This is what we had planned, this is what we had agreed to. This is how you put forward good legislation, when all sides of the House work together so that we can protect patients. Let's face it, I don't think there are any MPPs here who would say, "No, I don't think patients should be protected; I think we should attack them." No, this doesn't happen. This is something that we could find common ground on and that we could agree to.

And then, out of the blue, much to my surprise, this thing gets time-allocated. And now, rather than having

two full afternoons to talk about clause-by-clause and to make amendments to this very important piece of legislation—and I'm about to go into some of the details of the bill and you will quickly understand how important this piece of legislation is. In order to make the amendments so that we get it right—because if we don't get it right, the consequences could be dire, and I will dive into this in a few minutes.

We had all agreed that's the time needed to do the work. We had two afternoons, from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m., to get that job done. This has now been cut to two hours, and then the rest of the amendments will have been deemed to have been tabled, which is code—Speaker, I think you already know that—to mean that anything the opposition will put forward will be voted down and anything the Liberal government will put forward will be voted for, but without any debate.

I have been in here for a few years—10 of them, actually—and I have been the health critic for all of those 10 years. Sometimes, as you read those bills, you make suggestions that will make the bill better, that will make sure that the bill goes in the direction and reaches the end goal that we all want, which is to protect patients. But no, none of that will take place. We will, like robots, read into the record what the amendment will be—no exchange of opinion or “Did you think of that? What do you think of that? Should we use this word rather than that word?” None of that will happen. No matter what the Liberals put forward, they will all pass. No matter what the opposition, whether it be the Progressive Conservatives or the New Democrats, put forward, it will be voted down.

1650

This is really disappointing. We had worked collaboratively, fairly well. If you look at the four weeks of deputations that we listened to, the debates around the table, I would call them constructive. You could tell by the questions that were asked to the deputants that we wanted to make that piece of legislation better. We had all identified areas where it was not quite up to snuff and would need to be changed a bit in order to achieve our end goal. All of a sudden, all of that goodwill, all of those good intentions, all of those hours of deputations go out the window. We will have two hours to talk to one another, and then, after this, we will become robots who read into the record pieces of legislation, often out of context—because to read section 4(2)(1)(a) doesn't mean anything to anybody until you actually explain what this is all about. So we will read this into the record. It will be meaningless for 100% of the people who listen to us, when we already know that many people are interested in that bill.

I can tell you that for the two hours of clause-by-clause, we will have to look through 36 Liberal amendments, 35 Progressive Conservative amendments and 43 NDP amendments. Trying to fit that many amendments into 120 minutes is impossible, unless all of us can talk way faster than we will ever be able to do. It's just not feasible, which is too bad, because the bill comes in an order of things.

The first part of the bill, the part that we will be dealing with first—I'm not saying that it's not important—talks about the immunization of school pupils, so children's vaccinations. The children's vaccinations will change so that if people want to exempt their children from vaccination, they will now have to take an education session so that they fully understand the pros and cons of vaccinations and have a chance to have their questions answered. It will also change to make it that the care provider, whether a physician or nurse practitioner—or there could be other people allowed to give vaccinations in the near future. Whoever gives it to you, your care provider will be the one reporting to the health unit that such a vaccination has been given. So that's the first part of the bill.

Right off the bat, on the first part of the bill, we have a series of amendments. Why? Because public health units have come out, with all five sirens going, to tell us, “Hey, we haven't got the resources to get all of that information in. We usually get a vaccination card that has three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10 vaccinations, all at once, and we put it in.” None of the health units has the manpower to bring that in, and an electronic version of this does not exist in Ontario. The health unit uses this program called Panorama, but none of the primary care providers—and there are some primary care providers that are fully electronic in terms of records within their team, but they are not able to send this to the health unit electronically. You're talking about a whole bunch of manual work that nobody has the resources to do. The health units have come to tell us, “Whoa, whoa, don't implement this. We don't have the resources to do this. The idea is good, but wait till we have an electronic way of doing that.”

That will be the first part that we deal with, Speaker. Right off the bat, on the first part—schedule 1 of the bill—there will be some amendments, because you cannot put something in place that Ontario does not have the capability to do. We will be setting ourselves up to fail.

What's the point of asking physicians and nurse practitioners—who are the two who can give children immunizations right now—to feed all of that information to the health unit if the health unit is not able to put it into the database? We will be further off than we are now. Let me tell you, Speaker, that when there is an epidemic, it doesn't matter what it is—the recent measles and mumps outbreak in Toronto can certainly demonstrate the value of the legislation, of obtaining updated immunizations and information, but the systems are not there.

We know what we want to do. The end goal is clear, but the technology does not exist. Therefore, part of the bill has to be modified in order that we make sure that we don't set them up to fail—not to mention that a lot of physicians say they don't want this extra burden of work for something that will yield very little in return. Why is it that we don't wait until the electronic health records that exist in primary care can communicate with Panorama—which is the electronic health record that the

public health unit uses—so that every time you enter “immunization” into the health record of your primary care provider, it automatically “populates”—this is a fancy term that means “transfers it over to”—the health unit? Pretty reasonable. This will be the first part of the bill that we deal with.

As I said, there is a very important piece of the bill, which is schedule 4, that we may never have time to deal with, never mind section 5. I always wondered why section 5 was in, but I'll get to that quickly.

We're now talking about schedule 2. Schedule 2 of the bill had many deputants who came. All the way up to last Wednesday we had a number of people very knowledgeable about how our Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act works in Ontario. They too have made very good suggestions.

Let's be clear, Speaker: Ontario is the only jurisdiction that has completely privatized community labs. None of the other provinces have ever done this. Why we have done this is a huge mistake. We have an opportunity to do something about that. Many people have come and said, “You are finally opening up the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act. Please take this opportunity to change things, because this act has not been open in decades.”

Let me tell you that what a lab looked like in the 1990s and what a lab looks like in 2017 are two very different affairs.

What we have right now is that hospitals do work for their in-patients and outpatients. If you need to go for surgery at the hospital or you've been going to the emerg or you're admitted in one of their clinics for whatever ails you, the hospital will do their own testing. They will draw blood; they will do their own testing. They handle it in hospital, whether you're an in-patient or an outpatient. But the minute you are at your physician's, nurse practitioner's, midwife's or, I would say, naturopath's and everybody else, then you go to a private lab.

1700

The way we have it set up for the private lab, they each have a share of the pie. Let's say you look at the whole pie. We'll say the whole pie would be, just for a laugh, \$100 million. I'm not that far off. The whole pie would be \$100 million. One lab has 40% of the pie; they get \$40 million. The other lab has 60% of the pie; they get \$60 million. And that's it. The only regulation they have is that if they want to open up a new site, they have to let the ministry know. But if they want to close a collection site, they can do that any time they want.

Guess what? I represent the rural riding of Nickel Belt. When I started as an MPP, we had a collection site in Hanmer, we had a collection site in Val Caron, we had a collection site in Chelmsford and we had a collection site in Onaping-Levack. We had many collection sites throughout. Now guess how many collection sites are left in Nickel Belt.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Zero.

M^{me} France Gélinas: You're good. You're very good. Now everybody has to drive sometimes quite a

distance to go to the collection centre that is located on a large street in downtown Sudbury. But if you are not able to drive, all you have to do is pay and they will come to your house to draw your blood.

Can you see a problem here, Speaker? If you happen to live in an area of high-density population where the lab is able to make a lot of money on the volume of tests, you have very good access to private lab services. If you don't live downtown in a big urban centre but you happen to live in rural Ontario or northern Ontario or anywhere that is not downtown, those private labs can shut down the collection centre whenever they want and there's nothing the government can do. The only thing the government can do is to tell them if they can open up a new site or not.

The opening was never an issue; it was the closing that was the issue. What a good opportunity: We have this Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act open right here, right now. Why don't we do those changes? But do you know what? I don't think that by 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon we will even be able to get into the second schedule of the bill, which means that none of those discussions will ever see the light of day—none of the good work that the committee has done together, I would say, so far in a non-partisan way. We were always able to find a middle ground to work together. All of this will be thrown out the window because the government decided to time-allocate.

Why did they decide to time-allocate? I don't know. The committee worked well. There is nothing to lead me to believe that anybody was going to hold this thing back. I thought we were working pretty hard to get it right. All of a sudden, “No, you will have two hours, and it doesn't matter, all of the hard work and the goodwill that have been put into this. This goes out the window.” All of a sudden, you have a Liberal government that doesn't want to play fairly anymore, that doesn't want to collaborate, that doesn't want to have the best result that comes when everybody listens to the other side and puts good ideas together to make a bill even better. I still don't know why they've done that, but they have.

There are other issues with specimen collection. One of the parts of the bill, as it exists right now, removes the existing exemption for physicians' offices, nurse practitioners' offices and midwives' offices. Right now, if your physician or your nurse practitioner or your midwife so decides, they can draw blood or they can have somebody within their team do the blood test right there in their office. In northern Ontario, given that we have very few—remember? One lab on a large street in downtown Sudbury; that's it, that's all. Given that we have many, many physicians and nurse practitioner's offices, community health centres, aboriginal health access centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics—they all have collection centres where they offer services so that people don't have to drive that far. Now, with this bill, we are removing the existing exemption, which means that we don't know, but maybe all of those collection centres that are in community health centres, physicians' offices,

nurse-practitioner-led clinics, aboriginal health access centres etc. will now have to go through the rigmarole of accreditation, equal to what you ask a lab to do.

Everybody has come forward and said that this is a bad idea. Even all of the labs that have come and done deputations said that if they offer the services in a primary care team or a physician's office, sure, the lab should have all of the accreditation, but if it is the physician's office itself that provides the service—or the nurse practitioner, or the midwife etc. who provides the service—then they have the qualifications to do that safely. They have their own colleges that supervise that they do this within their scope of practice. The practice has been done in Ontario forever, amen. It is safe and it should continue. So why do we have a bill that removes the existing exemption—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Excuse me, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Huron—Bruce on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Do we have a quorum?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return back to the member from Nickel Belt to continue debate.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. It was a nice little break for my voice, so much appreciated.

This is one part of schedule 2 that is problematic. There are other parts that are equally problematic that come from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. I don't know about you, Speaker, but when the Information and Privacy Commissioner reads through a bill and tells you that you should consider changing something, I feel like we should do those changes, because we appointed an Information and Privacy Commissioner for that specific reason.

So here we go. He goes on to say, "There is no apparent justification for granting the ministry new authority to collect, use, or disclose personal health information; the ministry only needs to indirectly collect personal information. Therefore, amend this section as follows"—we're in schedule 2, section 6, subsection 17.1(1), if anybody is following, but I doubt that. It goes: "The ministry may indirectly collect personal information and may use and disclose that information for the purpose of processing and issuing a licence under this act, subject to any requirements or conditions provided for in the regulations."

I would say that this is pretty reasonable. It still allows the ministry to do their work, and we will be basically following our own laws. I sure hope that we get to talk about this part of the bill, but frankly, I am not sure of that at all.

But the part that really irks me in that bill—you will remember that right now the private labs dominate. That's all we have in community labs, and the hospitals do their own work. For places like where I represent and

many other places, it would make sense to ask a community hospital to do community lab work. Basically, in rural areas, they tend to be the only show in town, but in other areas, it would also make sense. I'm thinking of right here, across the road at Women's Health in Women's Hands. I'm thinking of Women's College Hospital or other providers—sorry, not Women's Health in Women's Hands; I meant to say Women's College Hospital. It would make sense for them to directly deal with some of their very vulnerable people that they deal with, or for many other hospitals who serve specific populations it would also make sense. But right now if a hospital decides to do this, they do not get compensated for doing that work. That work is assumed to have been done by the private sector and the private sector gets paid for that work, while the hospital does the work. It is quite reasonable that we would want to make sure that our hospitals are compensated for the community lab work that's being done.

1710

The part that irks me no end is that it also opens the door for the private lab provider to start providing community lab services. Now you would have a for-profit lab company doing hospital work. We have seen this creeping in in some of our hospitals in Ontario. What this bill does is that it swings the door wide open for the privatization of our hospital lab services. Why on earth would we want to do that, Speaker?

Our hospitals need to maintain lab services. Our hospitals will continue to be the ones that have emergency cases and they will continue to need the ability, as well as the equipment and the resources, to do that work. Now we will open that up to the private sector to come into our hospitals, take good hospital jobs that come with pension plans, benefits, good pay and half-decent hours, and give that to the private sector, which will only want the high-volume lab services that you make money on.

I don't understand why you would have things like that in this bill. I can guarantee you that I will do my best so that those kinds of clauses are taken away. But chances are, I won't have the opportunity to do that, because this government has decided to time-allocate the bill.

There are a number of other amendments. As I said, we don't open the lab and specimen collection act very often. It could be a good opportunity to remove barriers for other providers. We all know that there are barriers right now to point-of-care testing so that nurse practitioners can finally do point-of-care testing.

I would ask that dietitians should also be allowed to do finger-prick tests. This is how you test for how much glucose is in the blood, how much sugar is in the blood, for people with diabetes. For a lot of dietitians, a big part of their caseload is dealing with people who have diabetes, but they're not allowed to do finger-prick tests so that they can see the amount of sugar in a patient's blood. We have the opportunity to do changes. I think that when the Dietitians of Canada came and talked to us about this, there seemed to be a good reception from all sides of the House. I sure hope that we will see that.

Another thing that we see opening the door is—remember I told you how Ontario is the only province that has privatized all of their community lab work and has basically taken the pie and given everybody a percentage of the pie? No matter how many collection centres they have, no matter how much work they have, they get a piece of the pie. Now we're expecting them to bring managed competitions forward.

We have seen this in home care, and right now our home care system is broken. One of the major reasons our home care system is broken is that the different home care companies fight against one another for contracts and hold back on best practices as a competitive advantage. That's not how health care works. In health care, if you find something good, if you develop a best practice, you share it with everybody and their brother so that everybody learns and our health care system becomes better throughout. But not in home care. In home care, they will keep their best practices as a competitive advantage so that they can get more contracts so that they can get more money.

Now, through this bill, we are opening the door to the exact same thing with lab services.

Coming from northern Ontario, representing 33 little rural communities, there's nothing good in competition for us. Nobody is going to fight over Westree, Shining Tree, Gogama, Mattagami. Nobody's going to—they're beautiful communities, and I'd invite all of you to come to those communities, but are private labs interested in fighting over one another to get those contracts? No, absolutely not. Our health care system should not be sold to the lowest bidder, because we want equity of access, and we want people in rural and northern Ontario to have equitable access to lab services. So opening the door to that does not work.

I see that the time is going by really quickly.

The third section is the Ontario Drug Benefit Act. Finally, now that we have this act open, it would be a very good time to make sure that we get nurse practitioners included in all of the Ontario Drug Benefit Act so that we don't have to keep coming back and coming back, so that they can prescribe the drugs that fall within their scope of practice. It could also be a good opportunity to make sure that nurse practitioners who are becoming more and more active in palliative care have access through the facilitated access mechanism under the Exceptional Access Program. What does that mean, Speaker? That means that in order to get some of the drugs that are used in palliative care that are not available to other people but only available to people in palliative care, you need to have this facilitated access and you need to be able to send requests to the Exceptional Access Program. Right now, only physicians—and only physicians who have taken facilitated access—are allowed to do that. While the act is open, why don't we take this opportunity to fix that?

I would also say that while the act is open, let's add registered nurses to this. It's becoming quite obvious that RN prescribing, if not here now, is right around the

corner. Why not take advantage of this act being open to make sure that prescribing persons include more than just physicians, dentists, nurse practitioners and midwives? It could be a whole lot more.

Then we have the reason for the bill. The reason for the bill is schedule 4. Schedule 4 was brought forward basically because of the Toronto Star. The Toronto Star did a number of exposés of horrifying stories of health care professionals, most of them being physicians, sexually abusing their patients. Then, they followed and saw how these cases were being handled, and all of us were disgusted by what we saw. We saw people's lives being ruined because they had been abused by their physicians, and very little came of that in the view of punishment for the physicians who had abused their patients.

The minister put forward a task force to look at this issue. Recommendations in a final report were sent to the minister and, finally, a year later, this bill was tabled. This bill does change a few things and basically will give the colleges—the colleges are the ones that give the physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, dentists—everybody. There are 27 regulated health professions in Ontario, regulated by 26 colleges, and all colleges look at the competency of their members and they are there to protect the public. If one of their members, whether it be a physio, a nurse or a physician, does wrong, they are the ones that are supposed to bring justice for the people who are being people abused. In the case of sexual abuse by mainly physicians, the punishment did not fit the crime, no matter how we looked at it.

1720

The panel made some serious recommendations. Some of them were adopted, but a lot of them were not. One of the recommendations that was adopted was that the college will be able to suspend a licence after they have received a complaint and done a first investigation. Of course, if the licence gets suspended, the person has a right to appeal that and has a right to be represented and to fight that. But at least you won't have to wait. That was one of the horrifying factors, that a guilty physician would often drag on this process to the point where many other people became victims of the same physician because the process for discipline was so long before a licence could be suspended. So now the licence will be able to be suspended earlier into the process.

We have to get this right, Speaker. Think about it: If you are a physician and you lose your licence, you lose your livelihood, you lose your reputation. You have a lot on the line. You have to make absolutely sure that the way we describe the physician or patient-provider relationship—when does the relationship start? When does it end? Who is allowed to do that and when? You have to make this extremely clear, otherwise the chances of making victims of innocent providers is there, it's loud and clear, and it's very worrisome to a lot of hard-working health care providers.

Unfortunately, I don't think we got it right. A lot of people came to tell us that they don't think we got it right. Basically, we have defined in the bill a patient as

somebody—you cease to be a patient a year after your last appointment. That works well for your typical family-physician/patient relationship. You've moved on; you're not with this physician anymore. But that doesn't work so well for a whole lot of providers. The example that we're always given is a radiologist. You have an MRI or a scan or an X-ray done in Sudbury and a radiologist in Windsor reads your scan and sends the report back. This radiologist has no idea who you are and certainly has no idea that he's had a patient-physician relationship with you. Yet the way we have defined this in the bill, they do. So within a year, if this physician happens to have a sexual relationship with somebody for whom he has read a scan, who he doesn't even know he's read a scan for, he could lose his licence, he could be named, and he could lose his livelihood.

I don't think we got that right. When something as important as your—you've worked really hard to become a nurse, a physio, an osteopath, a dentist, a physician, an occupational therapist or a speech—you've worked really hard to become a regulated health professional and, all of a sudden, because we don't have the right definitions in the bill, you are at risk of losing your licence.

The bill also gives a list of acts that are considered sexual abuse. I never like to work from a list. It seems like people who sexually abuse other people seem to be very creative in the ways they abuse other people.

And now I see that the time is running out. There are many, many amendments that need to be done there.

Section 5 of the bill—remember, I told you about section 5—is about seniors active living centres. Seniors active living centres have no patients whatsoever, but it is part of a bill that is called protecting patients. I don't know exactly who we're going to protect in section 5, but it has been shoved in there. I don't know why. What it does is open up the door to private providers of elderly persons centres, now called seniors active living centres. I know a lot of retirement homes that would love to have seniors active living centres within their retirement homes because once grandma is used to coming here to play cards, once she needs care, she's going to start paying the 5,000 bucks a month to that home.

We did not need time allocation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate? The member from—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I thought we get three “further debates”?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): One, two—I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. Perhaps I can get a cup of water; I was not expecting to rise so soon. However, in the words of the late, great Lawrence “Yogi” Berra, “It's déjà vu all over again.” Am I in some kind of a time warp here, Speaker? Because I'm sure I was in this very spot this morning talking about the undemocratic actions of the Liberal government. And we know the Liberals don't want to work. We know that they said that we were going to have night sittings

tonight and then, unless they're going to pull some kind of a stunt, they cancelled them. They just don't want to work.

And now, Speaker, they table a motion—and to my colleague from Nickel Belt, I thank you for your time on the motion, but you also always speak back to the bill and why we shouldn't have the time allocation and what's wrong with the bill. On Bill 87, we have a time allocation motion today, and the Liberals don't even want to speak to their own motion. Is that, Speaker, abject guilt or the height of arrogance? I am struggling with which one of the two it is—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Is that the choice? We need another option.

Laughter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And they're all laughing over there because they think this is funny. And yes; yes, I did have a chuckle myself. I did have a chuckle myself only because I am so flabbergasted by the behaviour of a government here in the province of Ontario. They want to get legislation through so they use the—they don't use the negotiate method; they don't use the committee method; they don't use the compromise method. They use the guillotine method. That's how they get legislation through here in the province of Ontario—the guillotine method.

So here we are, twice in the same day. In fact, Speaker, unless my memory fails me, we have not debated any piece of legislation today—

Mr. Steve Clark: Other than—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, this is not legislation; these are motions. We are debating time allocation motions. Now—

Hon. Liz Sandals: But we'd be happy to listen to you talk about the bill.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, now they'd like us to talk about the bill. Well, I could talk about some of the things my colleague from Nickel Belt spoke about as well and what the weaknesses are in the bill.

I had the opportunity to join the committee for one afternoon on Bill 87, and I quite frankly was shocked at the opposition to the changes in this bill, and the automatic almost presumptions of guilt of physicians, but also the way in which you determined—I was shocked when I listened to it—the one-year waiting period after you had any kind of a medical connection with a patient.

1730

I'll repeat it, because it bears repeating; it is such a good example and perhaps that's why my colleague from Nickel Belt used that as an example. You're in for an X-ray. The radiologist in another community reads the X-ray. The results go back. They have never met you; you have never met them. You happen to be in that community, perhaps going to a Liberal \$1,000-a-plate fundraiser. Oh, no, they don't have those anymore because they got caught with their hands in the cookie jar on that one too. But you happen to meet in that city, totally by accident. You strike up a conversation. You find that you have a few things in common. The next thing you know, you

exchange some contact information. A couple of weeks later, you don't know, "Do I call her? Do I not call her?" But you do and you find out she's been waiting for that call. And then the relationship develops, as it naturally does, if it's going to go in that direction. The next thing you figure out, "Oh, my God." You talk about what you do, of course: "I'm a radiologist." "Oh, that's interesting. I had an X-ray about six months ago." "Oh, my goodness, I read that X-ray. Oh, boy. Am I in trouble now?"

Do you see how life can throw you a little bit of a curve sometimes? Unforeseen circumstances, you really didn't anticipate this, and now that very radiologist could be in a situation where their very livelihood—their licence to practise medicine—is revoked. That's what could happen in this bill.

Maybe we should talk a little more about this bill, Bill 87, but we're not going to have the opportunity. I can look down the row here and see my colleagues—and anybody who has had the opportunity to speak to this bill for 20 minutes, could they raise their hand? I have one member of my caucus here who has had the chance to speak to this bill. One member has had the chance to speak to this bill.

This is the thing that just galls me to no end. It galls me to no end that this is how we do things in this Legislature. Do you know, Speaker, what part of the problem is? I look across here at the Liberal bench and currently in front of me—I know I can't make references to members not being in the House, so I'm not going to do that directly. But there's not a single member sitting on the Liberal side right now, as God is my witness, who has ever spent five minutes in opposition—not five minutes in opposition. They have no idea what it is like to live on this side of the House when you're trying to make positive changes to legislation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order, I recognize the—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please. You might want to hear what his point of order is. I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: That's only because they are so much better at being in opposition and losing elections. They're so—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That is not a point of order.

I return it back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Please continue.

Interjection: Liberal arrogance, right there.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, again, that point of order speaks to how I started my address today: the height of arrogance.

We were not referencing winning or losing elections, although I must say, I hope a good number of you get the opportunity to understand what it's like to be in opposition, just not too many. I hope you have that opportunity.

But having said that, if they had the opportunity, maybe they would think a little differently. I'm going to

reference one of their members right now who has had the opportunity. There are only, I believe, five members on the other side who have actually been in opposition. Of course, the member from St. Catharines has been here since Moby Dick was a minnow; we've got the member from York Centre; Eglinton–Lawrence; I believe the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North; the member for Ottawa West–Nepean; and of course the Speaker, who I will not count at this point as a Liberal member.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Oh, don't discount the Speaker.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would never discount the Speaker. I just didn't count the Speaker. There's a difference.

Those people would have some understanding of what it's like to be in a situation on the other side of the House and be dealing with this. But have we ever dealt with it where we're dealing with two time allocation motions in the same day? In fact, all this House is going to do today is deal with time allocation motions, except if the Liberals don't put up another speaker. I'm going to run out of time in eight minutes and 16 seconds, and if the Liberals don't put up another speaker, perhaps we will have another bill to speak to today.

But I do want to say a few things. I need to know—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I can help the Premier a little bit here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Jim wants to tell you about—

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, Jim doesn't want to tell me anything, Premier, but I want to tell you something.

I say this to the Premier: These are the bills that your government has time-allocated since July 2014. You remember that day when you got sworn in here? It's almost like a counting exercise: Bill 6, Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act; Bill 7, Better Business Climate Act; Bill 8, Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act; Bill 10, Child Care Modernization Act; Bill 15, Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act; Bill 18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act; Bill 21—I'm not even going to read the names anymore because I'm going to get tired.

Bill 21, Bill 35—now, I just want you to understand. These are not highways you're fixing; these are bills you're time-allocating.

Bill 57, Bill 80, Bill 91, Bill 103, Bill 112, Bill 113, Bill 115, Bill 144, Bill 163, Bill 172, Bill 173, Bill 186—that was just the first session. And then they got so tired of time-allocating bills, they found a better measure to shut down democracy: They prorogued.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, yes. Now the second session: Bill 13; Bill 37, Bill 17, Bill 92, Bill 124, Bill 127. Now, today, a great day in the history of Liberal undemocracy: a double-header. Yogi Berra would love it. A double-header on this day—what is it, May 16? May 16, 2017, the Liberal Party of Ontario had a double-header when they time-allocated both Bill 132 and Bill 87.

But are they are going to get up and defend what they've done? No, no, no. I'm hoping the Premier will

get up today. There is more time. You people have 40 minutes on the clock. You haven't use a second of it. I'm hoping the Premier will get up and defend to the people of Ontario why she loves to shut down debate in this House.

1740

I'll tell you, one of her most senior advisers, one of the longest-serving members in the history of this province—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Next to Harry Nixon.

Mr. John Yakabuski:—next to Harry Nixon. The member from Peterborough is correct, because he probably read my Hansard from this morning. Actually, he's quite a historian.

We're very close to the time, as I said earlier today, when the member for St. Catharines, Mr. Jim Bradley, is going to celebrate 40 years in this Legislature. I can tell you a little bit about Mr. Bradley. Mr. Bradley has been here for 40 years, but his desire to be here goes much further than that. In fact, Mr. Bradley ran for office in this Legislature in Canada's centennial year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please refer to the member's riding.

Mr. John Yakabuski: For the first time, he ran in 1967. He was unsuccessful. He ran again in 1971, and he was unsuccessful. He took 1975 off when he probably could have won. But then he ran in 1977, when the Conservatives were back in a minority status, and he won his seat and he has held it ever since.

But do you know what? Mr. Bradley didn't used to think much about time allocation at all. He didn't think it was a very good use of the democratic process in the Legislature—

Interjection: What did he say?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm going to tell you what he said.

Interjection: You already said that this morning.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, I didn't. I'm sorry there, my dear. This is new. This is new. But listen carefully. You might learn something.

On December 11, 2001: "We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That's most unfortunate, because it's what you would call anti-democratic."

That was Jim Bradley.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Who are you talking about?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please refer to the member's riding.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Pardon me: the member for St. Catharines.

On November 24, 1993, he didn't like them when the NDP was in power either. He said, "I'm concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate. I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that's been going on a very long period of time. But as I've indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening."

That is so appropriate, given our committee hearings and the response that we have received from the medical community about this bill, Bill 87. The medical community does not believe the debate should end on this bill. In fact, they expect that a whole lot more needs to be said about this bill.

But Jim Bradley wasn't done there—I mean, the member from St. Catharines. Now, I like this one, and I believe my colleague from Leeds–Grenville may have used this one, because it's really appropriate to Mr. Bradley:

"Today the strongest person is the party whip. The party whip simply tells the members of the committee what shall happen, and it happens"—

Mr. Steve Clark: The government whip.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The government whip, of course. We know it ain't me, that's for sure.

"That's unfortunate, because on all sides I think members have something to contribute: the opposition to concede when the government has made moves that are acceptable and good, and the government members to find problems that might exist in government legislation. But that is virtually gone. It is virtually dictated now by the Premier's office."

That's what Jim Bradley said: "by the Premier's office." Well, I say to the Premier—I've only got 10 seconds left—I'm asking you to go back to your seat and stand here and defend what you're doing here, or withdraw the motion and let democracy live.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please be seated. Thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I don't know how to follow that. I'm gobsmacked. I'm sure that—

Interjection: Just be reasonable.

Mr. John Fraser: Just be reasonable? That's a good point. Thank you. I'll try to do that. I take to heart what he's saying. I also understand that when you put 300 amendments to a bill that's in committee, maybe you don't want it to pass. We could have that conversation, but we're here today to talk about Bill 87.

The member from Nickel Belt said the impetus behind this bill was the front page of the Toronto Star, but it's more than the front page of the Toronto Star. It's actually a power imbalance, something that we've seen that has happened inside our society where things were happening—whether it's sexual assault or sexual abuse—in a certain community, and that was not being dealt with properly.

We all know that it is the minority of practitioners that offend. I think that when we had our committee meetings, Dr. Douglas Mark said the same thing. He said that it's very, very few physicians who ever have incidents, out of all the physicians that we have in Ontario. Do you know what? He's right: The risk is low. The risk is low, but the harm is great, and that's why we need to take action on this.

I want to read from Farrah Khan, somebody who is an advocate for victims of sexual assault. Here's what she

said: "I'm here because I want to first say thank you to the government for recognizing patient sexual abuse. It is a huge issue in Ontario, and something that advocates have been working around for two decades. We know this....

"If we want to further prevent sexual violence from happening to patients, we must take action to ensure that the relationship between a patient and the regulated health professional is built on a foundation of trust, safety and confidence....

"When sexual violence is left unaddressed in the health professions, not everyone will feel safe to access it. And isn't the point of universal health care that everyone has a right to access it?"

Speaker, I think we did hear a lot in committee hearings. They were very, very helpful. As the member from Nickel Belt pointed out, I thought that the questions that were asked by all of the members of the committee were pertinent and relevant, getting to the bottom of concerns that different stakeholders and different presenters had in front of committee.

I do want to say a couple of things to the member from Nickel Belt. Her comments around seniors' centres: I've heard that very clearly. I look forward to the amendments that are coming forward that will address that.

I also want the member to know that facilitated access actually changed last October to allow primary-care physicians more access to those palliative medications that they needed. As well, the nurse practitioners—we did hear their concern at committee. They've been connected, and that situation has been resolved with facilitated access.

The other thing to remember with facilitated access is that we still need that for those high-dose opioids, because of the measures we have taken to ensure that we address that as part of our opioid strategy.

The immunization of pupils and ensuring that we keep our immunization rates up, to protect our population and our children, are critical. Those measures are inside the bill. Of course, the labs and the access for hospitals to participate as community labs, I think, will be critical. It's an important part of the bill.

Speaker, I support this bill. I really appreciated the comments from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Nickel Belt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Madame Lalonde has moved government notice of motion number 29, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 87, An Act to implement health measures and measures relating to seniors by enacting, amending or repealing various statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

1750

A vote deferral has been handed to me. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), it has been requested that the vote on government notice of motion number 29 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, May 17, 2017. It's signed by the chief government whip, Mr. Bradley.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day.

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 11, 2017, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act. But before I do, I need to wish my brother, Dennis, a happy birthday.

Applause.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. And in the spirit of speaking about safer zones, I can't tell you his age today, but I will tell you that he graduated from the Ontario Police College with former OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis. So that might give you a little idea.

Mr. Jim Wilson: A young man.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes.

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That's good. I appreciated that very much.

Back to the matter at hand, though, I do sincerely want to speak to Bill 65, because I found it frustrating when the Liberals claimed at third reading that road safety is one of the Ministry of Transportation's top priorities. But I sat in general government with my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga and saw the government vote down amendment after amendment that was introduced to make our roads safer and, indeed, ensure safer school zones. I can't stress enough that time and again this government voted down every one of our 40 amendments that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga put forward. They were thoughtful, well-positioned, and they meant something.

When I say that, I have to share with you that probably, for me, one of the most disappointing amendments that this government voted down was one that was put in place to incorporate MPP Nicholls's wonderful piece of legislation that was introduced back in 2014. The member from Chatham–Kent had a very straightforward bill, and it asked that the footage from school buses be

admissible, without a witness, as evidence in court, the same way that footage from red-light cameras is used. When the bill was first introduced in 2014, it received support from all three parties and passed second reading. I really appreciated that support in 2014, and I thought they would recognize the importance of the same message, the same initiative this year, just a couple of weeks ago. But unfortunately, they voted it down.

Reckless drivers illegally blowing past school buses that are stopped—the buses have their red lights flashing and their stop signs are out—have to be stopped. I can tell you that a neighbour of ours, a year older than my youngest sister, actually was struck by a car blowing past a public school bus when she came home from school one day. We'll never forget that. It was so frustrating that this young girl, coming home after a good day at school, was getting off the bus and was struck.

I don't know why this government doesn't walk its talk when they talk about wanting to make our roads safer for children. For Cathy, it was a close call. She did have head trauma and it affected her vision, but I'm so, so glad that she was able to come out of it. It's a lesson for us all. We have to be so, so careful when, whether you're in urban Ontario or rural Ontario, we're approaching school zones and school buses. We must obey the law.

For goodness' sakes, the private member's bill from the member from Chatham-Kent: It was good. There was no reason why it had to be voted down just a little bit ago in general government.

Because this government voted down all 40 amendments brought forward by the member from Kitchener-Conestoga with regard to Bill 65, some would suggest that it was maybe just all partisan. Isn't that unfortunate, Speaker? Even Hazel McCallion reinforces our leader's position that there's no monopoly on a good idea.

Speaker, incorporating the PMB initiative introduced by the member from Chatham-Kent should not have been voted down. It should not have been hammered down by a partisan hammer. I'm so disappointed on that.

I just want to talk a little bit more about why it's important to keep our roads safe.

There's another initiative that was introduced a few years ago—I think it was in 2014—by our member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, and that was about paving the shoulders of our roads. I want to talk about that and focus on it a little bit.

We had an incident a couple of years ago in the riding of Huron-Bruce, specifically in Huron county, where a teacher, a beloved teacher, was preparing and training for a triathlon. She was on her bike just near Carlow, and unfortunately, she got struck by a vehicle. She was tossed into the ditch and as a result she is now living life from a wheelchair. She had broken her back.

But she has proven to be such an amazing inspiration. I am so pleased that she leads by example. In fact, I'll say it this way: She's actually picking up more speed. Nothing is stopping her since she has adjusted to life in a

wheelchair. Julie Sawchuk is a person who needs to be admired, and the county of Huron is doing that.

Just this past spring, the county of Huron passed an initiative whereby they are going to pave the shoulders of the road. I hope the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka is pleased that his initiative has been heard, specifically by the county of Huron. On the roads most travelled by bikes as well as regular cars and transport trucks and buses, they are going to pave the shoulders of the road to make life safer for all.

Again, going back to Bill 65, we had a variety of amendments, aside from what I just touched on, to make our school zones safer, because there were some errors in the legislation that needed to be corrected—for example, the type of fines that would be experienced if someone was speeding in a community zone versus speeding in a school zone. So, even though they voted down our initiatives, I am glad that this government brought forward their own amendment to clean up their own mistakes.

It has been a disturbing trend, Speaker. Going back for almost a year now, we have seen this government, bill in and bill out, use committee to fix their mistakes, and that is absolutely wrong.

Mr. Norm Miller: Two hundred amendments.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It just shows that Ontario has a government that's tired and out of steam, and they're not even bringing forward good legislation out of the gate. They have to wait until the opposition hammers away during second reading. They have to wait for deputations of people, who mean so well to make a difference, to realize, "Holy smokes. You know what? When it comes to clause-by-clause, we'd better clean up our own act."

We just had a bill this past week where the government introduced 200 amendments. That's wrong.

Going back to Bill 65, I think it's safe to say that this government voted down all of our amendments because of their severe partisan ways, and it's unfortunate. You're seeing it with Bill 65; you're seeing it with the time allocation motions. They do not want democracy to excel. They are tired. They're out of steam. The only way they're going to move forward is if they bully and push their legislation through, and that's wrong.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

1800

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Haldimand-Norfolk has given notice of his

dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The member now has five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or his parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I'm pleased to recognize the member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: As I indicated, the reason for my dissatisfaction with that response from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs—it was a question on processing vegetable marketing. I felt the information could have been shared in this House and would not influence a pending court case.

During question period, I asked about the status of the government's detailed economic analysis. The reason for that, Speaker, was that back on August 17, 2016, Minister Leal issued a directive to the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. He indicated they were to develop a plan for engagement and consultation with interested parties and stakeholders and, "at a minimum, the plan shall include ... a detailed economic analysis of industry competitiveness and opportunities for growth considered by the commission in support of any proposed amendments." That was nine or 10 months ago.

First of all, very clearly, where is this economic impact study? There has been considerable time now. Secondly, I asked when we will see the establishment of the industry advisory committee that has been talked about for the last 10 or 11 months or a year. I also asked when we will see the election of directors and the appointment of staff to make the required decisions during harvest. Planting, irrigating and harvesting are looming, and there is the need for oversight with respect to grading, adjusting contracts, filling contracts, given changes—who knows what the weather will be like then, and so many other factors that can have a dramatic influence on the production of a crop.

Last summer, we circulated a petition. I attended so many meetings, primarily of cucumber growers and tomato growers. I will just read in part; it concluded by saying,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the government of Ontario support the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers' right to negotiate price terms and conditions of contracts for processing vegetables in Ontario...."

There was an article recently—it would be this month—in the Farmers Forum, and it brings us up to date a bit. It indicates that the processing vegetable growers are looking to overturn what they say is a dangerous precedent set by the province after the growers' organization board of directors was fired by the province and replaced by an appointed trustee to act as a negotiator.

The growers believe the province sided with the processors to reach a contract price point. The growers have said that the impasse in negotiations could and should have been resolved by binding arbitration.

Obviously, when there is an impasse—it was resolved; it's over with. Why do we have this continued situation of an appointed trustee?

Myself and the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex have been working on this for so many months now. We feel there's inadequate representation with respect to the negotiation process. We've received so many emails. Here's one, for example: "The wish of the growers to move on into more successful seasons of negotiations and harvests has been hampered by the lack of elected representatives with the appropriate supports and respect to be equal negotiating partners to members of the processing industry. The refusal of the government of Ontario to replace the trustee—who fully admitted his lack of knowledge and experience with the processing vegetable industry—with elected grower representatives is taking the power to negotiate with processors out of the hands of the growers. Inadequate representation reduces the faith of the grower in the long-term sustainability of the industry, and can greatly impact their financial decisions and choice to remain a member of the growing community."

Speaker, something like this happened down in Australia a number of years ago. It did not end well for the growers, for the processors and for the industry overall, and our concern remains.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to the minister may now reply. I recognize the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell.

Mr. Grant Crack: I'd like to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for giving me the opportunity to talk about some of the great things this government is doing to support our agricultural and farming communities right here in Ontario.

As Minister Leal mentioned this morning, we understand that there is a pending legal action surrounding members of the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers alliance, and they have commenced legal proceedings for judicial review relating to vegetable processing. With that in mind, it would be inappropriate for the minister or myself to comment on a case before the court, or action that individuals may choose to take.

Instead, I will take this opportunity this evening to simply say that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and our government are committed to growing the agri-food sector and ensuring that it continues to generate jobs. We are also committed to maintaining a system of regulated marketing, including the processing vegetable sector.

Earlier this year, we acted to protect the economic well-being of farm families and processing jobs in the vegetable industry here in Ontario. Our government was not prepared to allow a negotiating impasse to negatively impact farmers and processing jobs in Ontario.

The minister appointed a well-respected expert in the agricultural sector, former NDP Ontario Agriculture Minister Elmer Buchanan, to act as a temporary trustee with a mandate to complete the 2017 negotiations in a manner consistent with the current regulatory framework

and the government's support for regulated marketing and marketing boards. We are pleased that the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers and our three major tomato processors worked together to reach negotiated agreements for the 2017 growing season.

I appreciate their hard work during the negotiating process to ensure a deal was reached that ensures tomatoes that are grown this season will be processed right here in Ontario. We wanted to protect family farms and the processing industry, which are both so important to agriculture in the province of Ontario.

We look forward to continuing to follow this matter as the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission continues to fulfill the directive issued by the minister last August and to continue to work with the commission and the sector to develop a regulatory framework to achieve reform that is consistent with the needs of both producers and processors for the 2018 growing season and beyond.

I must remind this House that the member asking the question was quite pleased and supportive of the minister's directive back in August. In a London Free Press story, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk praised the minister's action, stating, "This is the way democracy is supposed to work. This is quite heartening."

Ontario's agri-food sector is an economic powerhouse contributing to growth in our province, creating more than \$36 billion in GDP and supporting 800,000 jobs. As this House knows, we are working with the agri-food sector to create 120,000 jobs and to double our growth as part of the agri-food growth challenge. We're well on our way to meeting that challenge, with 42,000 jobs already created since we launched the challenge in 2013.

In contrast, there have been both actions and inactions made by the opposition, which leaves their commitment to the province's agri-food sector unclear.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, Minister Leal is embarking on a trade mission to key Great Lakes states to meet with government and business leaders, to emphasize the importance of two-way trade between the US and Ontario.

During this engagement mission, the minister will no doubt highlight our government's clear support for the supply management system, which has a proven track record of protecting Ontario producers, processors and consumers from extreme market fluctuations.

Where do the member opposite, his leader and his party stand on this issue? They haven't even responded to the comments made by the administration down south about our dairy sector. Why haven't they?

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to hear that both the opposition and the third party will be voting against our government's fair hydro plan.

It's rich for the member to say that he and his party are on the side of farmers when, time and time again, the opposition have voted against measures introduced by our government to support our farmers. They voted against our Risk Management Program that has consistently helped farmers since it was launched in 2011; they

voted against our \$30-million investment in the Local Food Fund in 2013, which was so successful in helping farmers innovate and deliver more local food in Ontario to consumers; and now they will be voting against giving farmers a 25% break on their electricity bills, beginning this summer. That is just shameful.

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Mr. Speaker, we're taking steps to grow Ontario's farming sector, support rural Ontario and help Ontarians in their everyday lives. I'm proud of all the initiatives we've worked on in helping our farmers meet their goal of supplying food to this great province of Ontario. Good things do grow in Ontario.

RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or her parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: As I noted in my question this morning, it has been over five years and four Ministers of Natural Resources and Forestry since I first started asking about the future of Rondeau cottages. The reason I asked the question is that there's less than a week to go before the Rondeau cottagers return to see what repairs may be needed after this past winter. Their leases are set to expire in less than eight months, and with that, the current agreement states that the Rondeau cottagers will have to tear down their cottages at their own expense.

To explain why I was dissatisfied with the minister's response this morning, I will simply quote from the various ministers who previously responded to my questions on this matter in years past. On June 20, 2012, former MNR Minister Gravelle stated, "We have initiated environmental and economic studies to help inform our decisions for Rondeau in the future." Then on April 3, 2014, then-Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry David Oraziotti said, "As the member also knows, there were environmental and economic studies that were supposed to be done. They are nearing completion. We should be able to release those in the next several weeks...."

Then we fast-forward to July of the same year, 2014. Now it's Minister Mauro's turn. He stated, "It's my understanding that a third-party review is being undertaken on both of the studies—both the environmental study and the economic activity study—so that we can very reliably count on the data that is yielded from both of those studies, and that will infuse our policy- and decision-making process on a go-forward basis.

"Once we've had an opportunity to review the details from those studies," he went on to say, "we'll be in a better position to advise the member of a decision, going forward."

Well, let's go forward now to October 23, 2014. I again asked if the government was ready to make a decision. Minister Mauro refused to put a timeline on the decision and shared this detailed breakdown of the ministry's process. The minister stated, "There were at least two studies that were conducted related to Rondeau, both economic and environmental. Those studies were brought in-house. They were reviewed. The issues related to Rondeau are considered so important to the government that they not only took in those studies, but then they also asked for a peer review of those studies. We're still analyzing that data." That's what Minister Mauro said.

Now, here we are. Two and a half years ago, the environmental and economic studies were completed and a peer review of these studies had already been asked for. Flash forward to this morning, 936 days later, when the new minister stated that the environmental study was not even complete: "That's where it rests right now: with the Ministry of the Environment, which is doing an environmental assessment." It feels like Groundhog Day here, Speaker.

Economic and environmental studies were initiated no later than when I asked a question back in 2012. In early 2014, the minister of the day stated that the government would be releasing those finished studies in a few weeks. Months later, the same former minister stated that they were going to be doing a peer review of those studies. Now years later, the newest minister stood up in the House and told me that they are now only starting the environmental study.

Given that the government has not been able to keep its own story straight, it's hard to trust any updates that they're providing regarding the future of cottages at Rondeau park.

Over the last several months, I have spoken with Minister McGarry several times about the Rondeau issue, and she always mentioned that I will be happy with what the government is going to do. I would ask, "What is that?", and the answer was, "You'll be happy with what the government is going to do."

Time is ticking. Next week, these cottagers are going to be going back to Rondeau park to see what repairs need to be done from this past winter, yet their leases are now set to expire this year. These cottagers are great stewards of the land who have cared for their lots and the ecosystem going back generations.

So, Speaker, to the minister I simply say that it's time to stop cutting bait and start fishing. Either stop stringing Rondeau cottagers along and let them know you're kicking them out, or let them know that their leases will be extended, so they can do the necessary repairs on their cottages, which will also boost the economy, as well. Either allow them to buy the lots their modest cottages are on or extend their cottage leases.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry may now reply.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'm happy to stand in my place today and clarify some of the comments made

regarding Rondeau cottages by the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. I'm glad to see that his enthusiasm to sit at night yesterday has carried over to this evening.

I do want the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex to know that I do share his concerns with the situation. I know that we've had several conversations regarding it. I know that we can both admit that this is a very complex situation and one with a long history, and there are many interested stakeholders both in support of and not supportive of the cottage leases. He didn't mention those in his remarks, but there are very many stakeholders who are not supportive of keeping the cottage leases in Rondeau park.

Before I talk about this any further, I want to remind the member that my office is always available if he would like to chat further about the issue or about any issue that he has. In fact, I know that my ministry office staff has met with him before, professionally and sincerely, to discuss his concerns and provide him with updated information.

My office has also been in frequent contact with the Rondeau Cottagers Association. In fact, they were in contact with the cottagers' association as recently as yesterday. If the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex ever wants to join those conversations, I would encourage him to reach out to my staff to accommodate that.

I know that December 31, 2017, is the date that the current leases expire for the cottages in Rondeau. I am pleased to say that our ministry is actively taking the steps that may lead to allowing existing private cottage lots in Rondeau Provincial Park to continue for the next 20 years, until December 31, 2038, something I know the member opposite is also well aware of.

But I do want to emphasize that there are members of the public who are strongly opposed to having the cottage-lot leases in the park extended. So I will further remind the member that a final decision will be informed by consultation, environmental and economic studies and an environmental assessment, which is ongoing, as he has pointed out in his remarks. This approach is intended to balance the interests of the public and the cottagers, and also to demonstrate fiscal responsibility while protecting the environment in Rondeau Provincial Park.

This is an important point to make: In any decision on this file, we have to ensure that we as a government are doing the best thing for the people of Ontario, whether that's ensuring that a sensitive environmental area is protected, or ensuring that the taxpayer is not footing the bill for a select few individuals to continue to enjoy cottage properties.

This is something that is important to me, and I'd like to reiterate my concern. We need to make sure that the Rondeau cottagers pay their fair share to the people of Ontario. Being someone who has advocated for fiscal prudence, I would hope that the member opposite agrees with me on this matter.

Speaker, there is something I know that the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex and I can both agree on, and

that's our appreciation for the strong community that the leaseholders in Rondeau have created. I know he has spoken about it before, and I would agree with him. But that's why it's important that we get it right. Rondeau is different from the situation in Algonquin Provincial Park, the other provincial park that has cottage-lot leases within its boundaries. Rondeau is a much smaller area, with much larger properties. In fact, some of these cottages are two-storey houses with two-car garages. That means that the concentrated impact of the cottages on the surrounding environment is much more significant. It's imperative that we make sure that the impact does not have significant ecological impacts, especially for our nearby species at risk. That's part of the reason why it has taken our Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change a while to sort this out.

As I said, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change plays a very key role and is ultimately responsible for the final decision on the environmental

assessment process. We have been continuing to work closely with that office on this process. They have not got it back to us, but I do know that I have faith that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will act appropriately in the final decision. We continue to work very closely with them.

It's in the interest of the leaseholders—also the park—especially given the complexity of this issue. It's important to make sure that we have a balance of all interested parties and of all of the facts and opinions on the matter, and to make sure that, going forward, we make the right decision, not only for the environmental issues but also for the cottagers and the general public.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to have been carried.

This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1821.

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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
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Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Sault Ste. Marie	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Peter Z. Milczyn, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Julia Munro
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Wayne Gates, Amrit Mangat
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Monique Taylor, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Lorne Coe, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant